

Queen Elizabeth II share flight with public for 1st time
LONDON (AFP) — The first time she will share a commercial flight with members of the public, the Queen will fly to New Zealand on the Commonwealth summit in Auckland, Buckingham Palace said Sunday.

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China gives 12-year-old buddha gets luxury car
BEIJING (AFP) — The Chinese government, seeking to control the unbridled devotion of Tibet, has given a luxury car to the 12-year-old Buddhist monk, a 12-year-old who was found in a cave in Tibet. The car is a luxury car, a 12-year-old who was found in a cave in Tibet. The car is a luxury car, a 12-year-old who was found in a cave in Tibet.

Stranded Russian circus flies home
CAYMAN ISLANDS (AFP) — The longest-running circus in town finally began its long trip home to Russia Sunday after being stranded for seven months in the southern Philippines and away from its bears for the first time. A seemingly endless series of mishaps ended in a down when a plane carrying the Russian circus was hit by a missile in the Philippines. The circus is now on its way home to Russia.

'Sudan harbouring over 500 militants'

CAIRO (AFP) — The Sudanese opposition in Cairo said Monday it had documents proving more than 500 Muslim militants, most of them Egyptian, were living in Sudan. The documents "specify the residences of more than 500 extremist elements and follow their movements," the spokesman of the Unionist Democratic Party in Cairo, Mohammad Mutassim, told AFP. Mr. Mutassim said the documents consisted mainly of "cassette tapes and letters." The opposition has also counted 38 homes in Khartoum and (its sister city) Omdurman where members of fundamentalist groups live, most of the Egyptians coming from Afghanistan. The groups also included Palestinians from the Islamic resistance movement Hamas and "certain Moroccan and Algerian fundamentalists," he said, adding, "all of them hold Sudanese passports and have received Sudanese nationality." Mr. Mutassim accused the National Islamic Front, the party of Khartoum's spiritual leader Hassan Tourabi, Sudan aid organisations and "Arab charity organisations" of aiding the militants.

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'King may visit Israel in November'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — King Hussein is to visit Israel on Nov. 17 to take part in an award ceremony for the key negotiators of the two countries' peace treaty, Maariv newspaper reported Monday. It said King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin agreed on the visit while in New York for ceremonies to mark the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. The foreign ministry declined to comment on the report. Maariv said the peace prizes were to be awarded in Beit Gabriel on the shores of Sea of Galilee to negotiator Elyakim Rubinstein, now Israel's ambassador to Washington, and his Jordanian counterpart in the U.S. capital, Fayez Tarawneh.

Escaped Gaza prisoner turns himself in

GAZA CITY (AFP) — A Hamas hardliner gave himself up on Monday a day after escaping from a Gaza jail along with two other prisoners, Palestinian police said. "Abd al-Aziz turned himself in at dawn in Gaza City," police said. A member of Izzedeen al-Qassam, armed wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, Mr. Aziz was arrested two months ago in possession of arms and a bomb close to the Israeli settlement of Netzarim in the self-ruled Gaza Strip. He was sentenced to 12 years in prison by a Palestinian court. General Musa Arafat, head of the Palestinian military intelligence said. But Hamas said he had not been tried. Police are still searching for Osama Abu Taha and Youssef Malahi who escaped with Mr. Aziz on Sunday after sawing through the bars on their cell window. Five police guards were Monday being questioned.

Israeli jets under Lebanese fire

SIDON (AFP) — The Lebanese army fired anti-aircraft guns at four Israeli warplanes which buzzed several areas of South Lebanon Monday, including strongholds of the Iranian-backed Hizbollah, security sources said. Anti-aircraft batteries swung into action as the fighter-bombers carried out mock raids over Sidon. Palestinian refugee camps and the Iqim al-Tufah ridge where Hizbollah is entrenched, they said. The Israeli planes fired several heat-seeking balloons as they swooped low over the areas, north of Israel's "security zone" in South Lebanon where tension has been running high over the past week. On Sunday Hizbollah wounded an Israeli soldier in an attack in the zone, a week after killing six soldiers in an ambush.

Ato sets terms for talks with rival

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Somali faction leader Osman Hassan Ali Ato has demanded that rival Mohammad Farah Aidede first withdraw his militia forces from the southwestern town of Baidoa before any talks can be held. In an apparent answer to recent reports by clan elders, Mr. Ato also demanded that General Aidede renounce claims of being president of Somalia, dismantle militia forces he calls the national army and support a national reconciliation conference. The new clan-brokered peace effort was launched by clan elders from the Sa'ad Habr Gedir clan, to which the two men belong, headed by Mohammad Abdullahi Awood, a former cabinet minister in the ousted regime of the late Somali president, Mohammad Siad Barre. Mr. Ato, Gen. Aidede's former financier-turned bitter enemy, heads rival wing within Gen. Aidede's United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA).

Israeli army may speed up Jenin pullout

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israel could speed up its withdrawal from Jenin, the first Palestinian town to be evacuated on the West Bank under the Sept. 28 autonomy accord, a senior foreign ministry official said Monday.

"We may make an effort at the request of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to advance the date of the end of the Jenin withdrawal" due to start Wednesday and be complete by Nov. 19, the foreign ministry director general, Uri Savir, said.

"The redeployment will begin by setting up a cooperation bureau in the Jenin district to oversee the transition," he said.

"Then there will be a three-week period when the army will complete its withdrawal and during which civil powers will be handed over on Nov. 5."

During those three weeks Israel will remain responsible for maintaining law and order, and only once the last troops have left will the Palestinian police take charge, Mr. Savir added.

Jenin, in the north of the West Bank, is the first of six Palestinian towns to be evacuated under a timetable agreed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) following the Sept. 28 accord signed in Washington to extend autonomy across the territory.

By the end of December, Tulkarim, Nablus, Kalkilya, Ramallah and Bethlehem are also due to have been handed over to Palestinian control to allow elections to a self-rule council to take place in January.

Special arrangements have been made for the flashpoint town of Hebron where soldiers will remain to protect 400 settlers living among 120,000 Palestinians.

The army and the government were Monday at loggerheads over the cost of the West Bank redeployment which the commander of the region, General Ilan Biran,

estimated would cost a billion dollars, twice the amount allocated in the budget by the finance ministry.

Mr. Savir stressed that "half a dozen terrorists could sabotage the whole process if the Palestinian Authority does not meet the challenge."

"Terrorism must be confronted firmly from the first day on the West Bank because time is limited," he added, saying it was only in March that the self-rule authority began to "take the necessary measures" to clamp down on opposition to the autonomy accords.

Palestinian police launched a series of sweeps, arresting members of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas and the Islamic Jihad which have carried out the majority of anti-Israeli attacks.

The Jewish state warned the PNA on Sunday that it could reconsider the redeployment timetable if there were any further bloody attacks.

In a symbolic gesture, the Israeli army earlier this month quit four Palestinian villages on the West Bank ending 28 years of occupation.

"If the evacuated towns turn into sanctuaries for terrorists, we will be able to re-examine the timetable for redeployment," said Environment Minister Yossi Sarid.

Agriculture Minister Yaakov Tsur warned on Israeli radio: "There could be many obstacles to implementing (the redeployment) according to the timetable. It is very clear that Israel cannot accept terrorism with the peace process."

With the deadline for withdrawal from Jenin fast approaching, Israeli troops arrested six militants from Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the town and surrounding villages on Sunday, sources said.

Deaths in Saudi blast rises to 8

DUBAI (Agencies) — An Egyptian man died on Monday of injuries from a bomb blast in a Saudi mosque during Friday prayers, bringing the death toll to eight, hospital sources said.

Survivors told their horror as a bomber locked the door of the packed mosque in the incident last Friday in which 101 people were injured, according to accounts in the Saudi press.

One witness said he first heard what appeared to be a sound similar to that of a gunshot.

"Then everyone rushed to get out of the mosque but found the door was locked... all were crying and frightened," said the witness, Abdullah Mubarak Al Omari, according to the English-language daily Arab News.

The attack took place in Quba village in Bisha, a mountainous tribal region of Saudi Arabia's remote western province of Asir. More than 30 people are still in intensive care units.

Police and civilians searched the rugged terrain after the authorities identified the prime suspect as Abdullah Ben Mohammad Ben Sa'ad Al Amri, a Saudi national also known as Ben Muammar.

He is a retired non-commissioned officer who served previously in the Saudi civil defence. Informal sources said he had two wives and 13 children.

The government, moving swiftly to quell speculation of political dissent, said Ben Muammar had been involved in a dispute over land with some people in the mosque.

He faces public beheading by the sword if found guilty. The Arabic-language Al Hayat daily newspaper quoted Hassan Al Zifaf, governor of Bisha province, as saying that the man would soon be arrested.

The Palestinian ambassador, Samir Abu Ghazaleh, met for two hours with Capt. Kolidas to discuss the plight of those left behind and was in contact with other Arab

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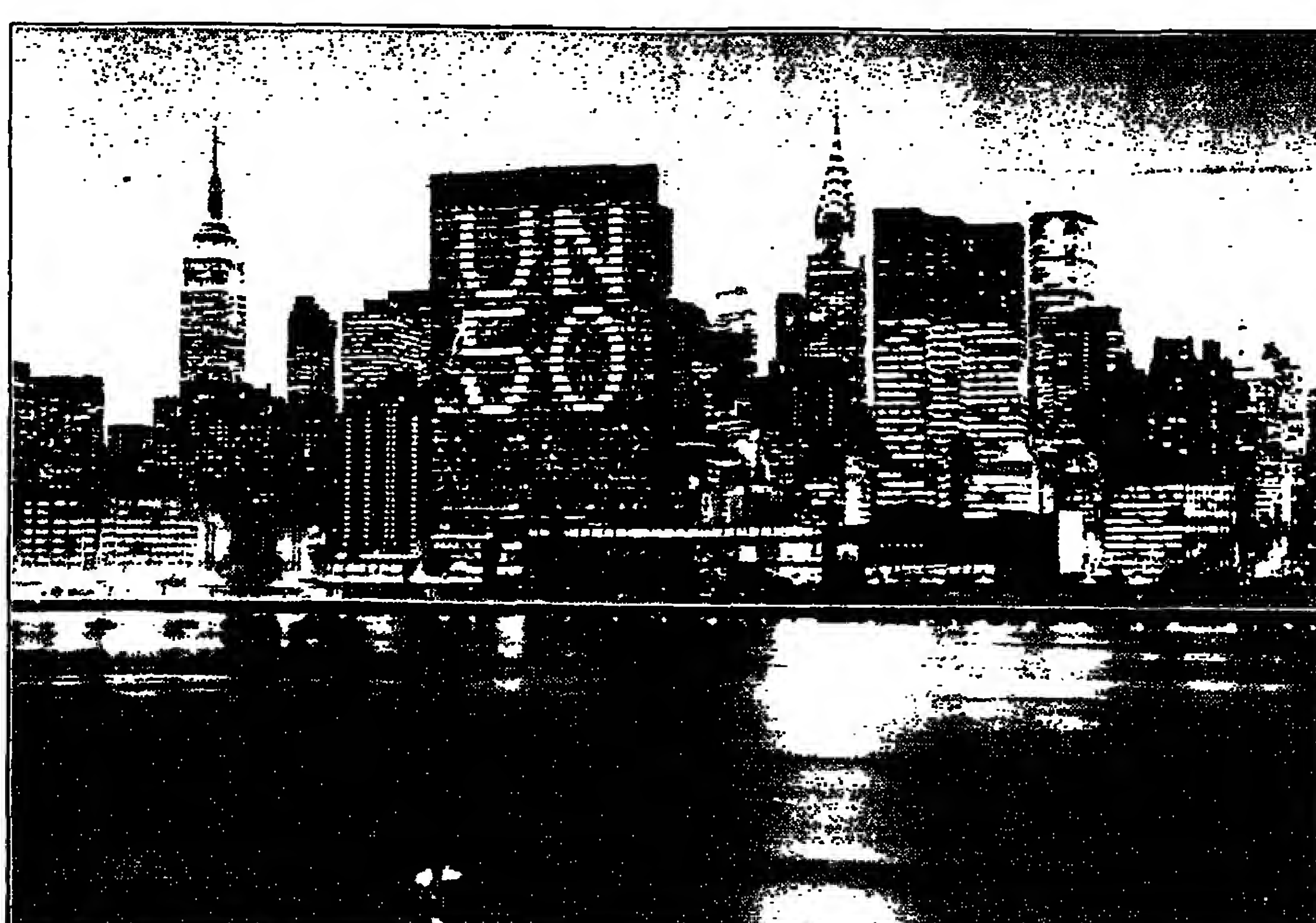
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U.S., smaller nations at cross purposes

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Leaders of nations large and small, amassed in New York on a scale never seen before, are taking the stage one by one on the United Nations' 50th anniversary to call for major change in the way the world body works.

U.S. President Bill Clinton opened the three-day anniversary ceremonies Sunday by calling for cutbacks in the U.N. bureaucracy and for streamlining the organisation to press for human rights and combat international terrorism and drug trafficking.

But other leaders said members must first pay their debts. Members owe the United Nations \$3 billion. The biggest debtor is the United

States at \$1.3 billion. More extraordinary than the speeches delivered or the issues raised was the scene itself. It was the largest gathering of world leaders in history — an assemblage as colourful, fractious and diverse as humanity itself.

Before the speeches began Sunday, 190 leaders from nations including the United States and Russia, Iran and Israel, India and Pakistan lined up for a group picture. When the photographer told them to remove their name tags, women in saris and men in African robes searched for a pocket, then all looked up and beamed as a smiley-face banner unfurled before them.

Outside the U.N. complex, police set up barricades to

keep away several thousand protesters championing issues ranging from human rights of Pakistan's cultural minorities to the overthrow of Cuban President Fidel Castro.

"What country is it?" asked Joyce Cotten of Baltimore, in town for a sorority convention, as she emerged from her hotel to about 80 protesters chanting slogans in a foreign language (it was Bangladesh).

As it marks 50 years since its formation, the United Nations is grappling with its worst-ever financial crisis, wrung dry by demands for peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Angola and elsewhere, and by member

states' failure to pay their dues. British Prime Minister John Major demanded reform of the United Nations, calling for some U.N. bodies to be scrapped and warning that failure to act could threaten its future.

In a hard-hitting speech, Mr. Major said the world body was spread too wide and was shot through with waste and duplication. "I want change because I want the U.N. to succeed."

"Inaction is no longer an option. The threat to the future of the U.N. will not come from inertia," he said. Iran, while paying homage

(Continued on page 7)

King holds bilateral talks in New York

NEW YORK (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday conferred at his residence in New York with the president of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel, who extended to the King an invitation to visit his country.

The president also voiced his country's appreciation of the King's efforts to achieve comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, stressing that such efforts would benefit all people in the region.

The King also met Bahrain's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Ben Mubarak Al Khalifeh and discussed inter-Arab relations.

The minister voiced appreciation of the King's peace efforts and affirmed that his country will take part in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference later this month.

King Hussein later met Tunisian Foreign Minister Al Habib Ben Yahya, who conveyed to the King an invitation from the Tunisian president to visit his country. He discussed with the King a number of issues of common concern.

The meetings were attended by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, His Royal Highness Prince Hamzeh Ben Al Hussein, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem and Jordan's Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations Hassan Abu Na'meh.

Regent outlines Jordan's vision and approach to regional development

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The concept of economic development of the Middle East and taking advantage of the business opportunities in the region in an era of peace appears to have become internationally accepted. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said Tuesday.

The Crown Prince cited the expected attendance of government leaders and businessmen from 63 countries at next week's Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit as one of the strongest signs of this acceptance, adding that Jordan was making sure-footed moves towards realising the

objective of less in terms of bilateralism and more in terms of regionalism on the way to interacting with the international economic community.

Addressing an informal gathering of foreign media correspondents, the Crown Prince outlined his vision of economic development primarily based on a partnership between the public and private sectors rather than the state taking the initiative as the case had been in the region for decades.

The MENA conference, he said, is part of the "effort of peacebuilding" and "peace consolidation."

Earlier in the day, the Crown Prince met with a Canadian Jewish Appeal de-

legation and said there was a lot to be done in the peace area after the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty for building sustainable peace in the region.

Regent reaffirmed Jordan's principles for building of peace adding that emphasis should be laid on the humanitarian aspect of the peace treaty.

Stressing the need for the two sides to promote understanding of each other's position in terms of culture, the Regent said "it was vital to bear in mind that a cultural agreement cannot be arrived at easily."

"I think there is a big deal of in-house work to be done," he said.

"We have to move from a

stage of comprehension to understanding of each other's position and let us work on a concept of sharing values," he added.

"I am talking about decency, integrity and human values on both sides," he said.

Among the major points that the Crown Prince made at the 75-minute gathering with foreign correspondents attended by Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath were:

Jordan considers the MENA summit not only as a prestigious event for itself and the Middle East but also as a landmark in bringing about major economic

(Continued on page 7)

Croatia talks resume; Bosnia in focus in U.S.

SARAJEVO (R) — Moscow and Washington argued over how to enforce a peace accord in Bosnia but talks resumed on Monday over the return of Serb-held territory to Croatia, another key element in a settlement in former Yugoslavia.

In Bosnia, a ceasefire negotiated as a prelude to peace talks at the end of the month was reported to be holding up well.

"It is the 13th day of the ceasefire and we are pleased to tell you that it holds well," U.N. spokesman Yuri Chizhik told a news briefing.

"UNPROFOR (U.N. Protection Force) did not detect any significant military action in the confrontation area."

However, in New York, the United States and Russia were still at odds over the makeup of an international force to police a Bosnia peace. Moscow refused to let its troops serve under NATO and Washington rejected a shared or rotating command.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said talks between presidents

Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton on Monday were unlikely to resolve the differences between Russia and the United States.

The gap was underlined earlier by Mr. Yeltsin, who told world leaders his troops would serve "only under a strict mandate of the U.N. Security Council."

The complexity of the issue was highlighted on Monday by a report that the Bosnian Serb "parliament" had agreed to accept peace troops on its borders only if they were from Russia "and other friendly countries."

Under a peace deal due to be discussed by the warring parties at the end of the month, Bosnia would be split between separatist Serbs and a Muslim-Croat federation, and a peace force of up to 60,000 would be deployed along the borders.

At the same time, we are prepared to take other necessary steps as well, if speedy reintegration of Eastern Slavonia... is not incorporated into the final peace plan for the region," he warned.

There are fears a Croatian

Milosevic taking over the peace negotiations on its behalf.

With the situation quieter in Bosnia, the spotlight turned to Croatia where talks resumed on the return of Eastern Slavonia, the last area under rebel Serb control.

In May and August Croatia recaptured other territory seized by the Serbs when Zagreb broke from Yugoslavia in 1991. It has threatened to do the same with Eastern Slavonia.

Croatian President Franjo Tudjman told a special session of the United Nations to mark its 50th anniversary on Sunday that he hoped such action would not be needed and agreement would be reached on the peaceful reintegration of the territory, which has oil wells and fertile farmland.

At the same time, we are prepared to take other necessary steps as well, if speedy reintegration of Eastern Slavonia... is not incorporated into the final peace plan for the region," he warned.

There are fears a Croatian

move to retake the region by force could involve Serbia, which borders it, and throw the peace process into turmoil.

In Paris, Foreign Minister Herve de Charette dismissed as disinformation a British press report that Belgrade was holding two French flyers shot down over Bosnia in August.

"I know where this comes from, it comes from a source for disinformation but I won't tell you which one," Mr. De Charette told Europe-1 Radio.

He was commenting on a Sunday Times report quoting Serbian intelligence sources as saying the airmen were believed to be in Belgrade after Mr. Milosevic's security police kidnapped them from a hospital in the Bosnian Serb stronghold of Pale last week.

The newspaper said the flyers were being held as pawns in a feud between Mr. Milosevic and Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and that Mr. Milosevic would "orchestrate their release shortly."

German SPD crisis deepens after Berlin election disaster

BONN (R) — Germany's opposition Social Democrats (SPD) met Monday to draw conclusions from an election beating in their one-time stronghold of Berlin, the result of months of wrangling and failure to shape new policies.

The SPD crashed to just 23.6 per cent in Sunday's state election in the city where former Chancellor Willy Brandt used to score more than 60 per cent as mayor in the 1960s.

It was the centre-left party's fifth worst showing in 174 state and national elections since 1945.

Commentators and party officials left no doubt where they thought the blame lay.

"Big mistakes were made here in Bonn over the summer," new party manager Franz Muentefering told west German radio as the party executive, including Chairman Rudolf Scharping

and rivals Gerhard Schroeder and Oskar Lafontaine, met in Bonn.

"We must make it clear that the personal wrangling in Bonn has to stop. I hope everyone has now understood where it leads."

Commentators were damning of the once-mighty party which has seen its nationwide ratings slide to post-war lows.

They wondered how much longer the lacklustre Scharping, already the subject of countless party coup rumours after a summer of fighting off Mr. Schroeder, could hang on.

Exit surveys taken in Berlin showed his personal rating had plunged to almost unprecedented depths for any party leader.

"The air for Scharping has got so thin, not only in Berlin, that it's hardly enough to breathe. And Schroeder, Lafontaine and co. are certainly not rushing

to resuscitate him," said the daily Saarbruecker Zeitung.

But the air is also getting thin for the whole party, which like other European sister movements is desperately seeking a new message as its traditional working-class base disappears. It has cast envious glances at the revamp which Tony Blair has given Britain's Labour Party.

German voters seem less and less sure what the SPD stands for.

In Berlin the big gains went to parties with sharp profiles — the east German reform communist Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), which took 14.6 per cent, and the leftist-ecologist Greens, with 13.2 per cent.

"The problem of the SPD is that it is stuck in the middle and is in danger of being ground away — in the west between the Christian Democrats (CDU) and the

Greens, and in the east between the CDU and the PDS," SPD Member of Parliament Thomas Krueger said.

The SPD was unable to maintain any profile in Berlin as the junior partner in a coalition with Chancellor Helmut Kohl's CDU, which slipped three points to 37.4 per cent in the poll. But the SPD has also been unable to grab attention in opposition in Bonn.

"People don't think the SPD has economic competence any more," ZDF national television commented. "In Berlin, people don't even think it would do a better job at fighting unemployment than the CDU."

"That's an alarm signal for all Social Democrats. It shows the causes of the defeat go deep and that questions of personalities alone are not nearly enough to explain the debacle."

Party leadership role for Suu Kyi ruled illegal by Burmese government

RANGOON, Burma (Agencies) — Burma's military government has ruled that pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi's reappointment to a leadership role in her political party is illegal, a government official said Monday.

The ruling by the Election Commission, which regulates all political parties, cited a 1991 rule banning further changes in party leadership, a commission member who demanded anonymity said.

Suu Kyi, who was freed from six years of house arrest in July, was reinstated on Oct. 9 as general secretary of the National League for Democracy, which she helped found.

The Election Commission ruling also prevents Tin Oo and Kyi Maung, former political prisoners released in March, from assuming their new posts as vice chairmen.

The National League for Democracy was forced to expel Ms. Suu Kyi, Tin Oo and Kyi Maung in 1991 to retain its status as a legal party. A government regulation proscribed parties from having members who were charged with offenses by the state.

Ms. Suu Kyi was detained, but never tried, on charges of endangering national security.

Changes in party leader-

ship must be submitted in writing to the Election Commission. The commission informed the National League for Democracy of its ruling last week.

The commission member said the party can still function legally with its old leadership lineup. The party's chairman is Aung Shwe, a former military leader.

The National League for Democracy won a landslide victory in 1990 elections, but the military government refused to hand over power. Instead, it said that the elections were to set up a national convention to draw up guidelines for a new constitution. The ongoing convention has been labeled a sham by human rights organisations because opponents of the regime have not been allowed to participate.

Many government opponents are still in prison or exile.

The government assumed power in 1988 after slaughtering thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators on the streets of Rangoon and other major Burmese cities. It has set no date for a return to civilian rule.

Meanwhile fuelled by age-old nationalism and the spoils of the opium trade, fighting is intensifying in Burma's remote Golden Triangle between the country's two most powerful

guerrilla armies.

Commanders of the ethnic minority Wa army, allied with Burma's military government since a 1989 ceasefire, vowed Monday to push guerrillas loyal to the Shan opium warlord Khun Sa out of the hills in this region of northeastern Burma.

"We must fight Khun Sa and defeat him or else he will completely swallow the Wa people like he has done to so many other groups," said Lin Wen, a senior United Wa State army commander.

Several thousand Wa reinforcements have been brought down from their headquarters area in northern Shan state on the border with China to this region in the south of the state, near the Thai frontier to battle Khun Sa's army since the current round of fighting began in June.

Another 2,000 reinforcements are on their way and more will be brought in until Khun Sa's fighters are driven out of the area, Lin Wen said.

The Burmese government has given permission for Wa troops to move from the north through government territory and mule caravans are travelling with them from the government town of Mong Hsat, loaded with mortar bombs, rocket grenades and other ammunition.

Trial of Japan cult guru may be delayed

TOKYO (R) — The murder trial of the leader of Japan's Aum doomsday cult may be delayed beyond its scheduled Thursday opening because his only lawyer was taken to hospital after a car accident, news reports said Monday.

Lawyer Shoji Yokoyama, 67, was involved in a minor accident in Tokyo Sunday. Initially, Mr. Yokoyama said he was not hurt but after examination Monday he was asked to stay in hospital for treatment for whiplash, the Kyodo News Agency said.

Shoko Asahara, guru of Aum Shinri Kyo (Supreme Truth) sect, is accused of masterminding the Tokyo subway attack. Eleven people died and 5,500 passengers were taken ill in the attack.

Trials for serious criminal cases in Japan cannot be held without the presence of at least one lawyer. It was not clear if Mr. Yokoyama could make it to the opening session.

When the accident occurred, Mr. Yokoyama was heading for police headquarters to see Mr. Asahara. Mr. Yokoyama was in a car driven by an Aum follower which was hit by two other cars when the driver tried to make an illegal U-turn. No one else was hurt.

Local newspapers said 8,000 police would be mobilised for security duty if the trial goes ahead Thursday.

The Mainichi Shimbun said hundreds of riot police will be on duty at the Tokyo District Court, scene of the trial, and the police headquarters where Mr. Asahara is in custody.

Police will also patrol major subway and railway terminals, underground malls, buildings housing the Justice Ministry, the Education Ministry and the Tokyo metropolitan government, as well as homes and offices of judges and prosecutors.

Their main aim would be to thwart any attempted attacks by Aum cultists to either disrupt the trial or free Asahara. Mainichi said. An attack by ultra-right activists was another possibility.

An spokesman for the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) said he could not confirm the Mainichi report.

Except for events such as the summit of the group of seven industrialised states, the MPD does not reveal the number of officers involved in a specific security operation, he said.



File photo of former South Korean President Roh Tae-woo (left), at the centre of a \$500 million slush fund scandal, with his security chief Lee Hyung-woo in the presidential Blue House in February 1988 (AFP photo)

S. Korea's Roh faces slush fund probe

SEOUL (R) — Former South Korean President Roh Tae-woo Monday faced mounting calls to explain a 48.5 billion won (\$63 million) political slush fund managed by his one-time top security aide.

The stock market slipped in a fit of anxiety over the allegations by the aide, with banking shares particularly hurt by worries that an investigation of the scandal might extend to all banks.

Opposition parties demanded Mr. Roh's arrest, while the ruling Democratic Liberal Party said the former military-backed president must be held to account.

"Senior members of our party have agreed that ex-President Roh can't avoid investigation as his former security chief said he received the money directly from him," a ruling party spokesman told reporters.

Finance and Economy Minister Hong Jae-Hyung told reporters tax authorities will probe corporations or individuals to find out if they evaded taxes in connection with the scandal.

An opposition Democratic Party spokesman demanded Mr.

Roh apologise for the scandal that threatens to lift the lid on decades of political corruption.

"Former President Roh should be arrested immediately and investigated," the spokesman said.

The former security aide, Lee Hyun-woo, stepped forward Sunday to declare he personally managed what he described as a 48.5 billion won (\$64 million) slush fund used by Mr. Roh.

On Sunday state media reported Mr. Lee as telling prosecutors the size of the slush fund was 30 billion won (\$39 million).

But on Monday he said Mr. Roh withdrew 12.1 billion won (\$16 million) at the end of his five-year term in 1993 and the balance of 36.4 billion won (\$47 million) from the fund was now kept in the Shinhan Bank.

Mr. Roh has made no public comment since the scandal broke Thursday last week when an opposition lawmaker accused him of controlling 400 billion won (\$522 million) of slush money.

He has declined all comment since Mr. Lee's statement. Earlier, his office quoted him as denying any

wrongdoing.

Yonhap News Agency Monday quoted Mr. Roh's personal secretary Park Young-Hoon as saying: "We don't have any plan to announce our position in connection with this case today."

Mr. Park was quoted as saying Mr. Roh ordered Mr. Lee to open the Shinhan accounts but did not know details about how they were operated and was "surprised to hear the accounts held part of the slush funds".

Mr. Lee, once Mr. Roh's top bodyguard and later director of the Agency for National Security Planning, Seoul's equivalent of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, said the money was used to cover a shortfall in the president's office budget.

He told reporters Monday he deposited and withdrew money from the accounts on Mr. Roh's instructions.

Asked by a reporter whether Mr. Roh knew that tens of billions of won was left over from a political fund, Mr. Lee said: "He roughly knew, although he did not know the exact size."

N. Korea says infiltration faked, slams U.S.-S. Korean exercise

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea Monday reaffirmed accusations that U.S. and South Korean troops had staged last week's spying incident on the demilitarized zone, monitors said.

"The 'incident' is really a clumsy drama ... a co-production directed by a poor scenario," the North's mouthpiece Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said of an infiltrator shot dead by South Korean troops last Tuesday.

One spy, said by the South to come from North Korea, was shot dead in the demilitarized zone. A second man, said to be a North Korean, was shot dead in the North.

Commenting on a United Nations Command protest, which North Korean army officers refused to accept, KCNA, monitored in Tokyo, said it was "foolish"

to try to take the matter through the Armistice Commission which "has been destroyed so seriously ... it cannot be revived."

North Korea contends the armistice is out of date, and is urging the United States to make a bilateral peace treaty, excluding South Korea, a position rejected by Seoul and Washington.

KCNA also slammed an ongoing joint training exercise in the South, charging that it was an "undisguised" violation of its nuclear accord with Washington.

A note accompanying the October 1994 agreement struck in Geneva that resulted in North Korea halting its suspect nuclear programme was not made public, but for the past two years South Korean and U.S. troops have cancelled their annual Team Spirit

war games in deference to the accord.

KCNA, quoting a spokesman for the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, called the current Foal Eagle 95 exercise a "replica of the Team Spirit nuclear war exercise," and demanded it be halted.

"If the United States and the South Korean puppets continue to aggravate the situation on the Korean peninsula ... they will be wholly responsible for the consequences," the spokesman warned. The U.S.-South Korean Command has said Foal Eagle involves rear-area preparedness exercises, command and control response, amphibious landings and anti-air and ground defence.

Singer pulls out of Irish TV show

DUBLIN, Ireland (AP) — Rickie Lee Jones pulled out of an Irish television show after producers refused to allow her to sing a song that could offend some religious sensibilities. The state RTE television network said it feared the song — called "The Altar Boy" — would be misinterpreted in Ireland, where several Catholic priests have been accused of sexually abusing altar boys. Jones said RTE's decision not to let her sing the song on the "Kennedy Live" programme on Saturday, was "based on current news and not on the lyrical content of my work. Had I not been asked to withdraw this song on this basis, I might have been performing another song. But to do so under these circumstances would be to condone censorship," she said. The Altar Boy, written three years ago, tells the story of "a chaste man who strove to maintain his commitment to the pure faith in the face of tremendous temptation." Jones said. Kennedy Live producer Noel Curran said the song title could have been misunderstood because "of recent controversies." But he denied Jones had been censored and insisted that the decision was made "purely on a programming basis."

Actress enjoys exploration of sex, violence in movies

NEW YORK (AP) — Actress Holly Hunter doesn't agree that movies have "too much sex and violence." "I enjoy an exploration of sex. I enjoy an exploration of violence. That's why I go see movies. That's why I go see plays. Because usually you find out a lot about who people are," the actress says in W magazine's November issue. One of Hunter's latest movies, Copycat, doesn't shy away from violence — it's about a serial killer who copies well-known murders. Hunter plays a homicide detective trying to get a forensic psychologist (played by Sigourney Weaver) to save the day. Hunter is also starring in Home For The Holidays, directed by Jodie Foster.

Tiny Matisse watercolour to fetch big francs

PARIS (R) — A watercolour by Henri Matisse which hung above a bedroom door in a quiet Paris flat for 80 years goes briefly on public display next month before being sold at auction. Just 31 cm high and framed in crusty gold cardboard, the portrayal of five nudes dancing hand-in-hand in a circle is the last of the celebrated "La Danse" paintings still in private hands. It will be shown for three days at the Drouot Auction House before being auctioned on Nov. 30. Art expert Jean-Marcel Camard believes it will fetch more than six million francs (\$1.2 million).

Gamblers swarm to Greece's new casinos

LOUTRAKI, Greece (R) — Las Vegas-style gambling has come to this Greek seaside resort and the punters are flocking in for the chance to win, or lose, a fortune. "This is a slow day," said casino general manager Tony Saracine. "We have an average of about 1,800 clients daily and 3,000 on Saturdays. Greece is very good business as Greeks are fanatical gamblers." With 20 slot machines and 40 tables for roulette, blackjack, dice and poker, the Loutraki Casino is among the biggest in Europe. It grossed more than \$3 million in the first two weeks after it opened Sept. 12.

Social Democrats make biggest gains in Swiss parliamentary polls

BERN, Switzerland (AP) — In a sign of future struggles over European Union membership, Switzerland's main pro-and anti-European parties have emerged the biggest winners in national parliamentary elections.

Both sides immediately claimed victory, setting the scene for wrangling on whether the Alpine nation should throw its weight behind continental integration or continue in splendid isolation.

The European issue was the top theme in an election campaign which also included "high" unemployment of 4 per cent, the sluggish economy, drug problems and the environment.

Final results were expected Monday. The outcome will not prompt any change in government in one of the world's most politically stable countries. The four-party coalition which has ruled since 1959 will continue to hold office under what the Swiss call their "magic formula" consensus.

Returns from the majority of cantons (states) and television projections showed the left-of-centre Social Democrats made unexpectedly high gains to become the biggest faction in the four-party coalition government for the first time in 20

years. They were set to gain about 12 seats to boost their share in the 200-seat National Council, or lower house, to 53 seats. Most of the gains were in urban areas and many were at the expense of the Greens.

"What's important in the next four years is that ... we at some stage finally make the opening toward Europe," said Social Democrat Chairman Peter Bodenmann.

Backed by young supporters, the Socialists argued that Switzerland cannot continue to be an island of old-fashioned neutrality in a rapidly changing Europe.

Even with the Socialist gains, the government is unlikely to force through a decision on Europe. It is still stinging from a 1992 referendum in which a slim majority voted against a lucrative European free trade area.

Christoph Blocher, a millionaire industrialist who leads the anti-European drive, maintained that a decision to apply for European Union membership would be delayed until the next century because of his campaign.

"I'm more than happy with the outcome," declared Mr. Blocher. His Swiss People's Party gained its

best result in more than 60 years thanks to its newly-strident message that Swiss independence reigns supreme. The party was set to gain 30 seats.

Of the remaining, centrist coalition parties, the Christian Democrats lost some ground, while the Radical Democrats did better than expected. Together they were expected to hold about 80 seats.

The parties outside the governing coalition fared the worst. The Greens suffered the biggest losses, while extreme right-wing parties which had advanced at the 1991 elections were stopped.

Turnout appeared to be low. Only 46 per cent of the 4.5 million electorate had voted in 1991.

The lack of interest can be explained by a "democratic overdose," with just 100,000 signatures enough to force a national referendum, the Swiss vote on everything from gasoline price hikes to anti-vivisection laws.

Since the last parliamentary elections in 1991, voters have tramped to the polls about 14 times to give their view on dozens of nationwide issues and hundreds of local ones.

Singer pulls out of Irish TV show

DUBLIN, Ireland (AP) — Rickie Lee Jones pulled out of an Irish television show after producers refused to allow her to sing a song that could offend some religious sensibilities. The state RTE television network said it feared the song, called "The Auld Man," would be misinterpreted in Ireland, where some Catholic priests have been accused of sexually abusing altar boys. Jones is RTE's decision not to let her sing the song on a "Kenny Live" programme on Saturday, was "based on current news and not on the lyrical content of my song. Had I not been asked to withdraw this song, I might have been performing another one. But to do so under the circumstances would be to condone censorship," said "The Auld Man" writer, three years ago, told a story of a priest who had been accused of sexual abuse. Jones said she had been told the decision was "purely on a programme basis."

Actress enjoys exploration of violence in movie

NEW YORK (AP) — Holly Hunter said she enjoyed exploring violence in the movie "The Piano" because it was a "very honest" look at the human condition. Hunter, who plays a mute woman, said she was "very into" the role and that she was "very into" the violence. She said she was "very into" the violence because it was a "very honest" look at the human condition. She said she was "very into" the violence because it was a "very honest" look at the human condition.

Tiny Matisse watercolour to fetch big franc

PARIS (AP) — A tiny watercolour by Henri Matisse, titled "The Piano," is expected to fetch a big price at an auction. The painting, which is only a few centimeters square, is one of the smallest Matisse ever made. It is expected to fetch a price of up to \$1 million.

Gamblers swarm to Greece's new casinos

ATHENS (AP) — Thousands of gamblers are flocking to the new casinos in Greece, which have just opened. The casinos are located in the coastal town of Thessaloniki. The new casinos are expected to bring in a lot of money for the government.



Security forces prepare for a cordon-and-search operation in the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo following tight security measures enforced in the wake of Tamil Tiger guerrilla attacks on key oil reserves (AFP photo)

Russia closes registration for parliamentary polls

MOSCOW (R) — More than 40 political parties submitted applications to run in Russia's parliamentary election before Sunday's midnight deadline but only eight of them can be confident they will be allowed into the race. The deputy head of the Central Electoral Commission, Alexander Ivanchenko, told a news conference Monday that most of the 43 applicants had turned up with the required 200,000 signatures of support in the final hours of the countdown.

The deadline passed before commission staff had finished stamping the petitions of support for the Democratic Russia Movement, the group which led President Boris Yeltsin to power in 1990 is out of the contest, Mr. Ivanchenko said. But Mr. Yeltsin's key ally, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's bloc Our Home Is Russia, is one of

the eight groups whose registrations for the Dec. 17 poll have already been officially announced. Also among the certain runners are the president's main opponents, Communists, Agrarians and ultra-nationalists. Papers submitted by 35 other groupings will be scrutinized by the commission in the next 10 days for possible mistakes and deliberate violations of regulations, Mr. Ivanchenko said. Electoral Commission head Nikolai Ryabov told reporters Saturday that police had investigated complaints of bribery, doorstep threats and other sharp practices by party workers. He said reported abuses included buying votes, veiled threats and the widespread practice by many party workers of claiming the affiliation of well-known people, without their knowledge, to win support. "We have sent certain

complaints to the Interior Ministry and they will take sanctions," Mr. Ryabov said. Even after formal registration, a political bloc may be expelled from the election race for violating the rules of the campaign. ITAR-TASS news agency quoted members of the Electoral Commission as predicting that about 30 political parties would make it through to the polls at which 450 seats in the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, will be contested. Mr. Ryabov has said having so many political parties is more likely to make a mess of the election than to contribute to democracy in Russia. He has said voters may be confused by having to make their choices from a long line of parties, most of which lack any definite political orientation. The atmosphere around the checks by the Electoral

25 soldiers, 50 Tamil rebels killed in Sri Lankan fighting

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — At least 25 soldiers and 50 Tamil rebels were killed in northern Sri Lanka over the weekend in the bloodiest fighting in the latest military offensive to capture the guerrilla stronghold, a military official said Monday. More than 100 soldiers were wounded in Sunday's fighting close to Jaffna, 300 kilometres north of Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, a military official said on condition of anonymity.

The government says its objective is to capture Jaffna, the headquarters of the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam who have been fighting for a Tamil homeland in the north and east of Sri Lanka since 1983. More than 36,000 people have been killed. But the rebel resistance toughened even as thousands of soldiers, supported by battle tanks, artillery and warplanes, captured rebel regions close to Jaffna City. Military claims that the latest offensive launched last week is the biggest in the 12-year ethnic war. Brigadier Sarah Munasinghe, the military spokesman, told reporters Sunday that at least 350 rebels and 76 soldiers had been killed in the first five days of the offensive code named "Operation Sun Rays." Another 500 rebels and 243 soldiers have been injured in the fighting. On Sunday, warplanes and field guns pounded guerrilla positions throughout the day but the rebels fought back fiercely with mortar, rocket and machine gun fire. Troops, who were only eight kilometres from Jaffna Saturday, could advance less than one kilometre Sunday.

The government has tightened security in Colombo and in villages in the north-east fearing more attacks by the rebels in a bid to halt the offensive. On Saturday, the rebels shot and hacked to death 66 Sinhalese civilians, including women and children, during attacks on three villages in northeastern Sri Lanka, the military said. The killings came a day after the militants took their battle to the Sri Lankan capital, blowing up two large oil depots. Twenty-six people, including 23 military personnel, died in fighting that followed the explosions. "We have taken additional security measures... These few weeks are very crucial because of the escalation of the offensive in Jaffna," said Dharmasiri Senanayake, the minister for media, tourism and aviation, at a press briefing.

The international airport, state-owned radio and television stations and a government newspaper group were some of the installations that have additional security deployed, said Mr. Senanayake. Police said at least 500 Tamils have been detained in cordon and search operations for rebels in Colombo. Their antecedents will be checked before they are released. Peace talks between the two sides broke down last April and the rebels ended a three-month truce. More than 3,200 people have been killed since then. Tamils, who comprise 18 per cent of Sri Lanka's 17 million people, claim discrimination by the majority Sinhalese in education and jobs. The Sinhalese control the government and the military.

Talks to resume as fighting continues in Chechnya

MOSCOW (AP) — Talks to resolve the Chechen conflict are set to resume Tuesday in Grozny amid repeated violations of a ceasefire which each side blames on the other. Several people were killed and others wounded in Russian shelling of villages southwest of the Chechen capital, a Chechen peace negotiator quoted by Interfax News Agency said Sunday. A spokesman for the Russian military command in Chechnya said the artillery fire was in response to attacks by Chechen separatists. He said federal forces had come under fire from separatists 50 times in the past 24 hours and three Russian soldiers were wounded. The talks were suspended on Oct. 9 after Anatoly

Romanov, the commander of the Russian forces in the tiny Muslim Caucasus republic, was seriously injured in an assassination attempt. He is still in a coma. Negotiations on implementing a July 30 demilitarisation accord had been advancing painfully slowly even before they were suspended, but their resumption seems to indicate the Kremlin's desire to see them through in the face of hardliners in the military who want to impose a solution by force. At least 30,000 people, most of them civilians, have died since Russian troops marched into Chechnya in December to quell a three-year-old independence drive. Russian President Boris Yeltsin last week went so

far as admitting that the conflict could have been avoided, "so many people have been killed there," he said. "It is the biggest disappointment of my presidency." Mr. Yeltsin and his negotiating team still faces strong pressure from hardliners on both sides. Defence Minister Pavel Grachev claimed Friday that 6,000 Chechens, backed by mercenaries from the former Soviet Union and beyond, were planning large-scale military operations. But with only two months from legislative elections, continuance of the military option would be a clear liability to Mr. Yeltsin's supporters. In a cabinet meeting Thursday, Gen. Grachev was slapped down by Prime Minister Viktor

Chernomyrdin when he criticised the effectiveness of the negotiations. The premier said everything possible should be done to resolve the problem by political means. Oleg Lobov, Mr. Yeltsin's special representative for Chechnya, was quoted by Interfax as saying in Grozny Saturday that the president and the government were optimistic. But on the ground the separatists have not gone away. Their green flags fly once more in many places, including Grozny, where intense exchanges of fire can be heard on occasion. The process of reconstruction in the devastated republic, meanwhile, has made no progress.

Yeltsin tightens grip on Foreign Ministry

UNITED NATIONS (R) — President Boris Yeltsin is extending his personal control over Russia's Foreign Ministry because of his dissatisfaction with Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, an aide said. Sergei Medvedev, Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman, said Mr. Kozyrev remained in his post for now — despite fierce criticism of his work by the president and Russian parliament. But he confirmed Mr. Yeltsin would name a deputy to help coordinate the ministry's work on his behalf, indicating that he is ready to accept almost complete personal responsibility for foreign policy. "The president thinks it necessary to coordinate all foreign policy activities

himself," Mr. Medvedev told a news conference during the United Nations' 50th anniversary celebrations. "He is not satisfied with the work of the foreign minister and sees ways to make the ministry's work better... Boris Nikolayevich (Yeltsin) has drawn attention to the need to select a deputy to Kozyrev to carry out organisational work," he said. Mr. Medvedev gave no firm clues to the long-term future of the embattled minister, but denied the doubts over his future were affecting his work alongside Yeltsin at the U.N. meeting. Mr. Yeltsin said last Thursday he was looking for a replacement for Mr. Kozyrev, who has forged ties with the west in five

years in office but is accused in Russia of letting Moscow be sidelined in international peace moves for Bosnia. He later clarified his comments by saying Mr. Kozyrev, 44, would stay for now, although a deputy would be appointed to help coordinate the ministry's work. Mr. Yeltsin's apparent readiness to be even more closely identified with foreign policy than now is risky. Nationalists and Communists have sharply criticised Russian foreign policy and only the adoption of a tougher stance against the West would be likely to appease them. Such moves could endanger ties with the West.

Mr. Medvedev said the shadow hanging over Mr. Kozyrev had not had any impact on Russian talks on the sidelines of the U.N. anniversary celebrations. "It has not affected the talks," he said. Mr. Yeltsin has held several meetings with world leaders attending the gathering and has a summit with U.S. President Bill Clinton outside New York Monday. Mr. Kozyrev had dinner with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher Saturday. "Everything bears witness to the fact that Mr. Kozyrev is continuing work, continuing to hold negotiations and continuing to carry out his duties," Mr. Medvedev said.

World leaders pay homage to U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The world's leaders from President Bill Clinton to Russia's Boris Yeltsin to Cuba's Fidel Castro paid homage to the United Nations on its 50th anniversary, but could not agree Sunday on how to make the world body more credible in the 21st century. At the same time, there was no sentiment from any corner of the world to weaken the United Nations, with many developing countries demanding it take a far greater role in economic policy and projects that would benefit them. "The new agenda of the United Nations with its heavy emphasis on peacekeeping operations has impacted adversely on the development process," said President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga of Sri Lanka. The North-South split between rich and poor countries was more evident than ever and Mr. Castro hammered away at the theme. And the United States was criticised by its allies and foes alike for driving the world body to the brink of bankruptcy by owing \$1.25 billion, which a hostile Republican Congress will

not pay. Mr. Clinton, who opened the three-day anniversary celebrations, said the world still needed the United Nations. "And so for another 50 years and beyond, you can count the United States in." But Irish President Mary Robinson warned that "if we do not infuse the United Nations... with a new strength of purpose and a new sense of direction I fear that the praise we give to the U.N. from this rostrum over these days will come in time to be read as its epitaph." United Nations staff, however, this week are doing what they can do well — organising a world event which saw Mr. Clinton, Mr. Yeltsin, Mr. Castro and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on the same podium in the same two hours. With more than 180 prime ministers, presidents, kings and other officials converging on New York for the largest summit in history, the main events went smoothly. On Monday Mr. Clinton and Russia's President Yeltsin hold a day-long meeting on the Balkans away from New York City. Mr. Clinton pledged to

find ways to make Congress pay the \$1.25 billion that the United States owes to the United Nations, mainly for expanding peacekeeping ventures. He also promised "that the United States will be there with our friends and allies" to help secure peace in Bosnia if the combatants reach an accord during peace talks next week. But minutes later Mr. Yeltsin said Russia would contribute troops to a peacekeeping force only if they were subject to a strict Security Council mandate, directly opposing Mr. Clinton's move to have it commanded by NATO. The United States and Russia then differed over who should control future peacekeeping troops in Bosnia, a key issue in their Monday meeting in Hyde Park, New York. Acid comments were not lacking as New Zealand and Japan attacked France and China again over their resumption of nuclear testing. Portuguese President Mario Soares criticised the "outrageous situation" in East Timor, whose decolonisation he said had been "brutally interrupted" by 20 years of Indonesian

occupation. And Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati condemned what he called United States "economic terrorism" and "self-aggrandisement" in the United Nations. But for sheer pageantry, it was Mr. Castro who played a starring role in the United Nations and on the streets of New York. At the United Nations he cast himself as the spokesman of downtrodden small nations, demanding a democratisation of the world body and railing against the big powers' veto right in a speech that stuck to its five-minute limit. Then he shucked his dark double-breasted suit to don his trademark olive-green fatigues for a speech at a Harlem church and a trip down memory lane to the nearby Theresa Hotel that once gave him shelter. "The incredible thing is that I am still expelled. I am still being left out of the dinners and the receptions and the banquets all these years. It's cold inside but it's no longer the cold war," he told the crowd.

Canada confused, upset by Quebec separatism

OTTAWA (AP) — Canadians living outside Quebec appear confused and upset by the desire of French-speaking Quebecers to leave the Canadian Confederation. Quebecers go to the polls on Oct. 30 in a referendum on the question of independence from the rest of the nation. In general, the confusion and lack of understanding for the nationalist aspirations of the Quebec separatists grows the further one is away from Quebec. In the prairies — Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta — and British Columbia, there is absolutely no comprehension of the need for a national Canadian policy of bilingualism and there appears to be resentment that Quebec's 7.3 million people would want total constitutional equality with the rest of Canada in a nation of 29 million people. These frustrations are probably best represented by the Reform Party which had overwhelming success in the west in the 1993 general election, increasing its parliamentary representation to 52 seats from the single seat it had earned in a by-election during the previous parliament. Reform also has one parliamentary seat from Ontario, but none east of Ontario. It did not even field any candidates in Quebec, although it says that it will do so in the next general election — assuming Quebec is still part of Canada. Reform's policies include abolishing bilingualism as a federal policy and as a condition of employment in the higher echelons of the federal government, leaving the question of language to each of the provincial governments. In the maritime provinces, the fear is that a nation physically divided into two — with a separate state of Quebec in the middle — will be as ungovernable as Pakistan was when it comprised eastern Pakistan — now Bangladesh — and a western half, with India in between. Ironically, the nationalist

fervour in Quebec has sparked off dreams by a small minority in British Columbia and Alberta of those two provinces setting up their own separate states, or perhaps merging into a new nation of western Canada. And this in turn has made easterners worry as all the maritime provinces, composed of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, rely heavily on federal "transfer payments" to shore up their economy. Two of the largest providers of these funds are Alberta and British Columbia. In New Brunswick, the fears are also cultural. New Brunswick is the only province of Canada which is officially bilingual, with roughly 40 per cent of its population being Francophone and the other 60 per cent Anglophone. The French of New Brunswick are, however, from different stock than the majority of Quebecers. They are Acadians and survived a British purge of

Francophone Roman Catholics before Quebec became part of Canada. In recent years, the Acadians have proudly rebuilt their French roots, culture and language. Canada's current governor-general, Romeo LeBlanc, is the first Acadian ever to hold this post as head of state in Canada. But Quebecers still distance themselves from other Franco-Canadians, pointing out that while the three prairie provinces were originally settled by French immigrants, they have all become virtually English speaking with Francophones being forced to assimilate into the English-language society. The 1991 Canadian census tends to support this view, showing that 1,000,000 Canadians living outside Quebec considered themselves Francophone, but less than 650,000 of them continued to speak French at home.

Tourists flock to Asian sites on eclipse watch

ANGKOR WAT, Cambodia (R) — Tourists flocked to some of Asia's most magnificent sites Monday to watch the rare shadow of a total solar eclipse. In Cambodia, tourists were arriving in their hundreds at the magnificent 12th-century Angkor Wat Temple, the world's largest religious structure, for Tuesday's phenomenon. In north India, many chose the abandoned Moghul city of Fatehpur Sikri near the Taj Mahal and site of the world's largest gate, to watch the spectacle. The eclipse will fall partially on the Taj Mahal. Four hot-air balloons were to videotape the shadow of the moon as it raced across the dome of the fabled wonder of the world. Many, many more watchers gathered at other places in India, Pakistan,

Bangladesh, Burma, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia to experience the brief spell of daytime darkness as the moon blocks the sun. The moon's shadow, which varies in size as it races along a band through South and South East Asia, will be about 100 kilometres wide at most. At Angkor Wat, authorities beefed up security to keep away monument robbers, bandits and rebels of the outlawed Khmer Rouge guerrilla group for an eclipse that will last one minute and 53 seconds from 1058 local time (0358 GMT). Skies were blue over the area with some clouds. However, some local residents worried clouds or rain might impair visibility. "We have strengthened security to protect the monument and the people coming

to watch the phenomenon," said Joan Chay, governor of Siem Reap province, where the Angkor complex is located. Hotels in Siem Reap City were fully booked. The authorities confiscated weapons from all but a special 300-strong police force, to protect the monument and tourists from any hail of gunfire, traditionally unleashed by Cambodians at the sight of a lunar or solar eclipse. Special Cambodia sun dances were being planned at Angkor Wat before and after the eclipse. In Malaysia's Sabah state, where the eclipse will be seen for the longest period on land — two minutes 14 seconds — a carnival atmosphere prevailed. More than 500 astronomers, marine scientists and wildlife experts set up

observatories on the North Borneo Island to study the eclipse's effects on plants, birds and other animals. According to ancient Hindu myth, an eclipse occurs when the angry monster-god Rahu tries to swallow the sun, and the only way to prevent the disaster is to scare Rahu away. People across parts of South and South East Asia will bang drums and pots and pans Tuesday to scare Rahu away. Brisk sales of protective wear have been reported across Asia and a debate raged in India between rationalists and astrologers over the effects of the eclipse. In Thailand Tuesday's will be viewed clearly in some provinces and partially in Bangkok.

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MENA deserves chance

LESS THAN a week is left before the convening of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit here in Amman on Oct. 29. With preparatory work in full swing to ensure the success of the conference, we are hoping that the outcome would place Jordan not only firmly on the political map of the region, but also make the Kingdom an attractive centre for investment and economic project launching.

While it is true that we cannot count on reaping automatic and immediate economic dividends from MENA, we can at least expect that the hard work we have put in preparing and holding it will serve two goals at once. These are: focusing the attention of the international community on the possibilities of peace, stability and progress in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as gaining for Jordan itself maximum advantage from the effort it has expended so far as the principal organiser of the conference.

When we talk about peace we certainly have more in mind than reaching political settlements between Israel and the Arab countries. The kind of peace that we hope would flourish should encompass inter-Arab relations which remain strained by past events and festered by mutual mistrust and suspicions.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has dwarfed the Arab-Arab disputes for so long that it is high time that cooperation and coordination among Arab capitals assumed a higher profile on our agenda for the present and future. It would be tragic if resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict turns out to be easier than settling inter-Arab feuds and conflicts of interest.

Through joint economic planning and coordination we have the best opportunity to heal all such wounds and establish the kind of regional institutions that would ensure for political settlements continuity and success. So it is indeed with sadness that we notice that some Arab capitals are hardly on talking terms, and that a number of those capitals have opted to stay away from Amman between Oct. 29 and 31 in a bid to weaken the resolve to build on peace. But then it might well be MENA's job to prove they are wrong.

On the other hand, Jordan has done well just to show that the summit can succeed before it begins. This the Kingdom has done, we hope, by sparing no effort to prepare well for it.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily criticised the Arab leaders for only offering lip service to the Iraqi people over their present plight and for doing nothing to alleviate their sufferings. By remaining passive, the Arab leaders are accessories to the crime of genocide in Iraq where four million people are facing death due to starvation and where 700,000 children died due to shortage of medicine and food as a result of the U.N.-imposed sanctions, said Samir Qatani. The writer said he was not demanding that the Arab countries lift the sanctions on Iraq because they are feeble to take such a step, but the Arab leaders should stop shedding crocodile tears over the sad situation in Iraq, should release the \$1.3 billion they hold as Iraqi deposits and immediately arrange for regular shipments of food and drugs to save Iraqis from starvation. By using the Iraqi people as human shields for the purpose of toppling the regime in Baghdad, the Arab leaders are accomplices to a crime being committed by the enemies of the Arab Nation, Dr. Qatani said. He said the whole world realises that the Iraqis no more possess weapons of destruction and have complied with all U.N. resolutions, two facts that should justify the termination of the sanctions.

The View from Fourth Circle

Muslims, blacks, and supreme America

By Rami G. Khouri

WASHINGTON, D.C. — I have had the most enjoyable and educational experience this week of participating in a conference on U.S.-Arab relations while simultaneously following the reaction among the American establishment and middle class to the "million man march" — last week's gathering of about half a million black men in Washington to focus on what they can do to stop the deterioration and degeneration of the black family and community. While the two events were not directly related — my conference and the black march — they do seem to be related in a manner that tells us much about contemporary American political culture and its interaction with the world.

The predominant American reaction to events in the Arab World is a strong focus on the phenomenon of political Islam. Any discussion of the Arab World here quickly leads to the issue of Islamism, and, more specifically, the violence of some Islamists in Algeria, Egypt and Palestine or the political practice of so-called "Islamic" regimes in Iran or Sudan. The obvious and very concentrated American preoccupation with a small portion of political culture in the Arab-Islamic world is more than only sociologically interesting. I believe that it reveals much about the nature of U.S. political culture, and thus it behooves us to understand more intimately how and why the American establishment reacts as it does to the two phenomena in question here — political Islam, and the dynamic self-assertion of black men in the USA, led by the controversial leader of the Nation of Islam, Louis Farrakhan.

In both cases, Arab and Iranian Muslims or American black men are expressing a brand of defiance that the American establishment finds both disturbing and threatening. The common theme of Arabs and blacks, in broad terms, is that the prevalent American policies and values of the last century or so have grievously denied Arabs/Muslims and blacks two very important things — a sense of security for one's family rooted in improving material standards of living, and a sense of dignity and humanity rooted in the acceptance of one's culture and values by the mainstream majority of white Americans.

Both Arab Islamists and black Americans like Louis Farrakhan represent something that is more troubling to the American majority than mere defiance — they offer an alternative. They both express anger at their treatment by the now globalising American political culture, but

they also both express the will to organise their societies along moral and material lives that are somewhat different from the ways of the American majority. In fact, I suspect that the Islamist Middle East is the only place on earth today that is both trying to resist somewhat the wholesale transformation into a global America, while offering a credible alternative in terms of family, individual and communal values and governance systems. Others who tried to do the same by asserting their cultural validity and distinctiveness in the face of the American behemoth — such as China or India — have given up, and signed up for the promise of American dollars and glitter. Only the Arab and other Middle Eastern Islamists hold on to the possibility that human beings can express their humanity and organise their societies in ways not necessarily made in the USA.

The American ideological majority finds this most incomprehensible, bewildering and even threatening, and thus American policy responds with strong military and economic and diplomatic force against Middle East Islamists. Few people in the USA have the time, desire or capacity to recognise that the violent Islamists who kill and oppress in the Middle East are in fact a small minority that is rejected by the majority of Arabs. The U.S. finds it useful to exaggerate the importance and power of Middle Eastern Islamists, and to emphasise the great danger it sees to U.S. interests should any Islamists come to power in places other than Iran and Sudan. The U.S. response to Middle Eastern Islamists is very interesting for its lack of thoughtfulness and rationality and democratic pluralism, because that response essentially comprises a narrow combination of violence by local proxies (Arab governments and Israel), threats by the USA, and an odd brand of old-fashioned moralising and preaching. The idea one hears so often from American officials — that they respect Islam but oppose violence — is not very credible because it is degraded by the obvious political vagrancy of the U.S. government's policy of ignoring the worsening suffering of the majority of Muslims in the Middle East, while perpetuating aid, political and other policies that tend to weaken the legitimacy of many Arab governments while promoting the credibility of opposition movements, even some that engage in violence.

The American government's attitude to American blacks is similar, but not so obvious. The single greatest instru-

ment of U.S. government policy towards urban black men is the criminal justice system, especially jails. There are more black men in jails today than there are in higher education institutions. No wonder that some half a million black men heeded the call of Louis Farrakhan last week. The U.S. establishment's response to Farrakhan and his half million men was fascinating to watch. The mainstream majority here prefers to deny the validity of the message of black suffering and despair by disqualifying the credentials of the messenger — the very controversial Mr. Farrakhan. This strategy will only backfire. I would guess, because it will simply perpetuate the conditions in poor neighbourhoods that gave rise to the message and the messenger in the first place. It is interesting how similar are conditions in poor American slum neighbourhoods and poor Arab slum neighbourhoods today.

Central Cairo and central Detroit have suddenly come very close together. It is no surprise that American blacks and Middle Eastern Muslims should both express anger at the dominant American political power structure, and that they should express that anger in a vocabulary of nationalist particularity and exclusivism that resists total subservience to the hegemony of American power. It is also interesting to see the central role of religion and religious leaders in leading the resistance to American domination. And finally, it is interesting to see the white power majority in the USA reacting in a similar way to the defiance of beaten men in the Middle East and in poor, urban America — reacting with violence, threats, preaching and a general desire to ignore the real problems of the world rather than to come to grips with them.

Many of the thoughts of Louis Farrakhan deserve to be criticised and ridiculed, just as many of the actions or ideas of Islamists in the Middle East can be criticised and objected to. But this is political immaturity and even irresponsibility, if it leads the U.S. government and power elite to ignore the suffering and needs of the millions of people who live in the tortured societies whence Farrakhan and M. Eastern Islamists emanate. If the messengers and even the messages are problematic for America, the underlying human needs of communities in despair should not be. These are instructive yet troubling times in America, both for America and the world that cannot any longer escape its powerful embrace.

Is it race or class that is splitting America?

By Gwynne Dyer

IS AMERICA a society gradually splitting apart along racial lines, as the more apocalyptic commentators on the O.J. Simpson verdict would have us believe? Of course not. It is splitting, but the lines are about class, not race.

"Most whites are basically indifferent to blacks, but they are certainly not trying to oppress them or hold them down," wrote Jared Taylor in his dissenting book about the failure of race relations in America, 'Paved With Good Intentions.' "If the U.S. has a real problem, it is not whites hating blacks. It is much more a problem of blacks hating whites."

Taylor is closer to the truth than most people, but the definitions need to be tightened. Not all blacks hate whites, but the black under-class does, and who could blame them? (Like most oppressed people, they also hate themselves, which is why black teen-age males in the U.S. are six times likelier to be murdered — almost always by other blacks — than white teen-age males).

Taylor is also right in saying that most American whites do not hate blacks. If they did, Colin Powell could never think of running for president, for over 80 per cent of American voters are still white. But most middle-class Americans of all races sense the hatred of the black under-class and are terrified by it.

And many of the police who man the front lines against this black under-class in America's big cities are racist, because that is what their working environment teaches them. Relatively few are as bad as ex-Los Angeles Police Department detective Mark Fuhrman, the man whose tape-recorded racist ravings

happened? Because in both cases an overwhelming weight of evidence against the accused was swept aside by racist preconceptions of the truth.

Yet there is no race war brewing in the U.S. It is a class war, and there are blacks on both sides of the barricades.

The African-American population of the United States, according to the 1990 census, was about 30 million, or just around one-eighth of the total. According to the census rules, a household income of \$35,000 a year makes a family middle-class — and 9 million blacks met that criterion.

Lyndon Johnson's Great Society worked. At least one-third of American blacks, and probably more, have escaped from the under-class. In 1970, only 15.3 per cent of blacks had any college education — today the figure is 48.3 per cent (compared to 59.8 per cent for whites).

The new black middle class is especially visible in the inner ring of suburbs

they were caught in mid-stream by a shift in the political climate when only a third had already made it onto the middle class.

"Blacks remain on the left, and everybody else has moved to the right," observes political scientist William Schneider of the American Enterprise Institute. "Blacks are the only constituency in this country who have no quarrel with Big Government. Big Government saved them from slavery in the 1860s, and rescued them from segregation in the 1970s."

Just as most American Catholics and Jews continued to vote Democratic for several generations after they escaped from the immigrant slums of the late 19th century, so do 90 per cent of African-Americans continue to vote Democratic today. But two-thirds of white males voted Republican in recent U.S. elections, in a backlash that was more about economics and gender, than race, and governments elected by those 'angry white males' have stalled the process of

Moreover, those astonishing statistics about one-third of American blacks in their 20s being in jail, on probation or on parole at any given time actually understate the problem. For if another third of the black population has joined the middle class, then it means that literally half the young males in the under-class are trapped in the criminal justice system.

In the meantime, the nation's police are left with the job of containing the nihilistic, insurrectionary populations of the black ghettos, with no relief in sight. It makes the best of them bitter. The worst of them become Fuhrmans, and even middle class blacks like O.J. Simpson are not safe in their hands.

That's not to say that Simpson is not a murderer. But if he wasn't, Fuhrman would have framed him anyway. Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman are dead, and no verdict would have brought them back. O.J. Simpson has filed for federal trademark registration of his name, listing over 120



LETTERS

Saving lives before MENA

To the Editor:

AT THE intersection outside our house the number of collisions peaked during the summer, at about a rate of one per week.

The damage ranged from minor, accompanied by much shouted acrimony, to major with the garden wall of the house diagonally opposite to ours, decimated and the occupants of the involved vehicles taken to hospital. Police have been summoned to the scene many times.

Then miraculously, one month ago, two small stop signs appeared. Alas, the one on our side of the junction was toppled after a mere two weeks and after lying on the ground for several days, vanished altogether.

At present, legion municipality workers are to be seen around West Amman busily erecting benches and other eye-pleasing features to impress MENA conference participants.

But it is probably too much to hope for the reappearance of our sign which might actually achieve something like saving life and limb.

Catherine Redden,
Um Uthaina,
Amman

Demanding equal rights

To the Editor:

I CANNOT but totally agree with Mrs. Karen Asfour (Rights for Women, Jordan Times, October 22) on the need for Jordanian women to pass on their nationality to their children. I, for one, have had to renew my daughter's residence permit for the last 11 years just because the father is of a different nationality. She is a student at a Jordanian school and has been living in Jordan since 1984.

In most countries of the world one can obtain the citizenship of that country just by living there for a minimum of 5 years, regardless of the fact that one of the parents holds the citizenship by birth. I think it is time that we gave equal rights to all citizens, regardless of the sexes and thus be true to the democracy we all aspire to.

Samia El-Lab

Now read all about it

John Carvel on how the Guardian won a famous victory over the secretive legislators of the EU after a three-year battle for more freedom of information

THE GUARDIAN's knock-out victory at the European Court in Luxembourg last week will, we hope, have some salutary effect on our opponents, the council of Ministers of the European Union (EU). The council is certainly the most powerful of the EU institutions, but there is no reason why it should continue to be the most secretive and arrogant.

I brought the case as a private citizen and was supported by the paper as an interested party. We acted because we thought the council behaved hypocritically and unlawfully when it denied us access to documents which should have been available under its freedom of information code.

When I was posted to Brussels three years ago, I soon came to the conclusion that this council operated under rules which were alien to the European democratic tradition. While preaching the virtues of transparency, it legislated behind closed doors. On most working days ministers would fly in from their national capitals to consider laws which, when passed, would be binding on the EU's 350 million citizens. But the citizens were not allowed to know what was being done in their name.

In London the Eurosceptics tended to rant against the European Commission as if it was to blame for everything which diminished national sovereignty. They got it wrong. The commission's job has always been to propose new laws and administer existing ones. The real power to decide whether legislation passes — and in what form — lay with the ministers of member states, subject to a little tinkering at the margin by the MEPs. To that extent the council has operated like a parliament, but — unlike all the parliaments of Europe — the legislative stages of its deliberations were confidential and without a verbatim transcript. Even the highly condensed minutes of decisions were classified.

For those of us who had no objection in principle to the pooling of national sovereignty to achieve common European goals, this secretive approach was an affront to democracy. For others of a more Eurosceptic disposi-

tion, it gave grounds for deep suspicion. Of course, plenty of information was given out on what went on in the secret legislative sessions. The latest drafts of directives were leaked systematically and national spokesmen descended periodically to spin their rival lines about how their ministers were having an excellent influence. The journalists usually made a reasonable attempt at piecing together several sets of half-truths into more or less accurate reports.

But the system ensured that a bedrock of unassailable fact was never available as of right to the citizens. It was never possible to state with absolute certainty that a particular minister behaved in a particular way. The people could never hold their representatives accountable.

At the outset, this undemocratic system may have been unavoidable. The Treaty of Rome was the result of a benevolent conspiracy by the elites of Europe to integrate their peoples to prevent them fighting another war. Treating legislation as if it was a form of secret diplomacy was a part of this paternalist approach.

Yet by the autumn of 1992 — after the Danes voted against the Maastricht treaty, and the French nearly followed — it became obvious to most of the players in the Brussels game that action had to be taken to make the decision-making process less remote. After more than a year of debate, the council agreed a code of conduct promising "the widest possible access to documents." It came into force early last year. I was one of the first to put in an application under the code asking for three sets of council minutes and supporting papers from Coreper, the committee of EU ambassadors which pre-cooks the ministerial agenda.

At the end of the month allowed under the code for reply, I received a letter from a Mr. Goebel, the council librarian responsible for the freedom of information policy, who subsequently became known to document-seekers as Dr. No. He enclosed a full set of documents from the Social Affairs Councils of October

and November 1993, which formed the basis for a useful article about how Britain secured an opt-out from a directive against the exploitation of child labour. However, other documents from the Justice and Agriculture councils were withheld "to protect the institution's interests in the confidentiality of its proceedings."

I used an appeal procedure to challenge this ruling. In May 1994, a month after the deadline for reply, the EU foreign ministers rejected the appeal and told me that the social affairs material had been sent by mistake "owing to the novelty of the procedure for allowing public access."

This was the decision which landed the council in court. Its justification for refusing to release the documents was a catch-all clause in the code of conduct which allowed it to withhold anything in the interests of maintaining confidentiality. But the council gave no reason for withholding these particular documents. In fact, we later discovered that there was a reason. In a panicky response to my demands, the council laid down a blanket ban on the disclosure of any minutes which might reveal national points of view. We knew this from a leaked memo by the council's own legal service which admitted that officials were systematically refusing access: but the memo could not be used in court without the council's permission.

Proposals were tabled to give middle-ranking officials the power to decide which ministerial statements could safely be released. Since the committee dealing with this matter was known in Brussels as the GAG — the Groupe Affaires Generales — the prospects for greater openness were sounding bad.

But help was at hand. The Guardian asked the European Parliament and the governments of Denmark and the Netherlands — all strong supporters of openness — to intervene formally. We knew that such intervention at the European Court would be normally limited to support for other member states or EU institutions. It was unprecedented for national governments to

back a citizen against the other members of the Council of Ministers club. But with careful lobbying we secured the help we wanted.

The case achieved some celebrity across much of northern Europe, particularly in Sweden and Finland — exponents of maximum transparency — as those countries moved towards their referendums on joining the EU. Their admission into membership in January began to tilt the balance towards reform. Ireland joined the reformers, partly as a result of a revulsion against secrecy caused by the Irish beef-tribunal scandal. A middle group, including Britain, Austria, Greece and sometimes Spain, sometimes joined in to secure a majority for the open camp. After more than a year of written pleadings, the case came up for an oral hearing in July. The council's lawyers assured the judges that it never operated a blanket ban on disclosure of minutes, but the Danes and the Dutch said this was untrue. The judges barred the council side with a series of probing questions.

Earlier this month the council agreed a Danish proposal which ought to open up the minutes of future law-making sessions of the council. Last week the judges ruled that the council cannot hide behind rules of procedure which gave more priority to confidentiality than to citizens' rights of access.

The court found that the illegality of the ban on disclosing minutes was so clear-cut that it did not have to examine the Guardian's more far-reaching arguments that EU citizens have a fundamental right to know what happens when EU laws are made. This was a pity. Our case, based on the EU treaties, the European Convention of Human Rights and practice in the member states, seemed compelling.

These are the arguments which will now inevitably be put at the 1996 inter-governmental conference to review the Maastricht treaty. Plans to give the public access to the first and third readings of the council's legislative proceedings appear to be attracting consensus support from the member states and commission. For our part, we are content that we have nudged the debate in the right direction and have established the first chapter of EU law on freedom of information. We have established the legal floor, but we are still a long way from the ceiling.

The UN at 50: Lots of unfinished business, little wherewithal

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The evening news and the morning paper may make one forget that today is the 50th anniversary of the United Nations and that this week is World Week of Peace, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly. Signed on this date in 1945, the United Nations Charter established the first universal organisation dedicated to achieving world peace and security and striving for social progress.

"Today the peoples of the United Nations mark the fiftieth anniversary of the only truly universal organisation in humanity's history," said UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali in his United Nations Day message. "In the UN was born the concept of peace-keeping, a permanent contribution to the age-old search for peaceful solutions. In the UN was heard the voices of the poorest of the poor. Here the difficult issues of development have received the most productive attention. In the United Nations, the new nations of the world came to take their rightful place as member states. Here sovereignty and statehood came together as the foundation-stones of an emerging international community."

The UN's annals chronicle numerous praiseworthy achievements and endeavours. Since its inception the world body has negotiated 172 peaceful settlements which ended regional conflicts; minimised the threat of nuclear war; eradicated smallpox from the farthest reaches of the earth and continues to press for universal immunisation against

polio, tetanus, measles, whooping cough and tuberculosis. Finally, and possibly most notable for this region, the UN has sought an equitable solution for millions of Palestinian refugees uprooted by the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948 and 1967, in the meantime providing free schooling and essential healthcare and social services.

While the UN's good deeds are well recognised, recent years have forced the world body to reckon with several setbacks and outright failures. A harrowing failure in Somalia set the tone for (non) intervention in Yugoslavia where, having wavered too long over the issue, the UN's jurisdiction was finally usurped by NATO. In the Middle East, the UN's role has been assumed by the United States and Russia, although the basis for a final settlement is derived from UN resolutions.

The close of the UN's first half century as it looks on to the next seems an appropriate time to consider what the future role the UN should assume in world affairs.

But in pondering the future role of the organisation, there is "no good answer," responded Dr. Hazem El-Beblawi, UN Under Secretary General and ESCWA Executive Secretary in Amman. Disunity among the UN general assembly member states is easily evident, Mr. Beblawi pointed out, and as it celebrates its 50th anniversary, the UN is owed a grand total of \$3.2 billion in overdue budget assessments, which has led to an acute shortage of funds.

"The UN is only a result of what the member states agree — we are in a transitional period after the cold war... our role then was to bring a forum acceptable to both blocks." People always thought, he said, that after the end of the east-west conflict the organisation would become more cohesive.

"Experience shows that this isn't always the case," he continued. "We are now in a fluid situation where, although a major impediment to international cooperation was removed, there is also a move among states to favour bi-lateral instead of multi-lateral efforts."

Today, as he explained, the UN faces a battle on two fronts: financial and intellectual.

The looming problem is how the UN will continue to perform without sufficient means from budget contributions of member states. "When small countries fail to pay, you can enforce penalties," he said. "When it comes to the biggest and richest country, theoretically you can apply the same, but it's impractical."

"The UN is in an awkward situation because of this: the US (which owes \$1.4 billion in arrears) is the major contributor. It can't pay, but it won't tolerate other states being the largest contributor."

The UN is also struggling to overcome its image of being an unmanageable bureaucracy. While there is no doubt that the organisation has become, by virtue of its size and multi-national nature, as bureaucratic as any government body, Dr. El-Beblawi said the case of the UN is often exaggerated. "The UN is no more wasteful than most advanced countries — but that's not an argument for

falling to work for improvement, which we are doing."

Also, he explained, the UN, while trying to reform its bureaucracy, is also trying to reform its thinking to correspond with the emerging new world order.

"We have intellectual baggage," he said. "This generation looks to the future with the memory of the past — which was dominated by the cold war and conflict."

"Peace and security were synonymous. Today we know that security is affected by many things: civil strife, racial discrimination, environment and economic issues. And peace (cannot be) dissociated from development. We can undermine our future not only by war... other issues are important, other than simply avoiding war."

The UN hasn't reached a "clear vision" of its future, Dr. Beblawi pointed out that the world body already plays a significant social and economic role through institutions such as UNICEF, ESCWA, UNRWA, the WHO, UNESCO and many others. "Non-political activities are more than two-thirds of UN activities," he said. The General Assembly, he asserts, is just not "trained" in this area.

So what should the international community expect of the UN for the next 50 years or even the next decade? Dr. El-Beblawi hopes for a wider role for the above agencies, but "there is total confusion right now."

"The signals change from year to year, but for the moment I think the mood is to cut waste and have a slimmer UN and at the same time emphasise (social

Comoros tells Djohar to stay away for now

NAIROBI (AFP) — The Comoros government on Monday asked President Mohammad Ali Djohar, currently in the French Indian Ocean island of Reunion, to delay his return to the country, the prime minister's office said.

Sultan Chouhouri, who heads Prime Minister Caambi Ali Yacoutou's office, told AFP in Nairobi by telephone that "an extraordinary cabinet meeting has just decided to ask the president to delay his return until the necessary conditions are in place."

"The government believes that his return now would be ill-timed. He could spark serious public disorder," Mr. Chouhouri said. "We hope that President Djohar understands."

When asked what the Comorian government would

do if Mr. Djohar insisted on returning, Mr. Chouhouri said: "The conditions of the resolution that is going to be sent to him by fax this afternoon will be sufficiently explicit."

Mr. Djohar said Sunday he intended returning to the Indian Ocean island nation on Tuesday and urged Comorians towards reconciliation.

French foreign ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt said in Paris that Mr. Djohar "is free to go where he wants."

If he wanted to return, "I don't see how we could prevent him," he added. "Developments (in the Comoros) are a matter for the Comorians."

Mr. Djohar was freed on Oct. 4 when French troops

put down a mercenary-led coup begun a week earlier by veteran mercenary Bob Denard.

Mr. Chouhouri said that round-table discussions held last week among the country's various political parties led to the adoption Sunday of a motion backing Prime Minister Yachruto, who is replacing Mr. Djohar pending elections.

The participants also agreed that presidential elections should be held either on Jan. 21 or March 31 of 1996, if several conditions, notably the setting up of electoral lists, are fulfilled.

Mr. Yachruto said earlier this month that it would be "very difficult" for Mr. Djohar to resume power and that opposition parties in a national unity cabinet set up to take control after the coup

bid failed had demanded his ouster as a condition for their support.

That coalition, set up with the support of the French ambassador in Moroni, could collapse if he returned, he added, and "if the coalition falls, it could be very grave."

"The president was very tired when I saw him," he added.

The 80-year-old president was flown by French authorities to Reunion for a "general medical check-up" after being freed.

His daughter Lelie Djohar said at the time that France had not given him the choice of staying or going, that he had "never been ill" and he was "not a sick old man."

"They said that for security reasons he had to leave" for nearby Mayotte or Reunion, she added, but he was not given "the choice of staying or going."

Regent outlines vision and approach

(Continued from page 1)

changes in the region. "Rehabilitation of the Middle East and North Africa region as a region with an identity" is the goal, said the Crown Prince.

— Establishing a firm base for business networking is a key objective of the summit parallel to realising closer interaction with regional and international financial and economic institutions, including United Nations agencies.

In this context, the Crown Prince announced that Jordan would be hosting a meeting of 46 ministers of trade in Amman in January under the umbrella of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

— Another key goal is setting up a mechanism for policy framework for regional economic cooperation and financing arrangements.

In this context, the Crown Prince said an agreement has been reached between the European Union (EU) and Washington to establish a Middle East development bank.

A "green signal" has been sent "on the Brussels-Washington axis" over the proposal for the bank, the Crown Prince said referring to the EU, which is based on the Belgian capital and the Clinton administration.

He did not elaborate, but

said agreements were also emerging on the proposed setting up of other regional institutions.

These include a Middle East tourism council and a Middle East business council. The two institutions and the development bank are expected to be announced at next week's summit.

— While the United States has indeed taken the lead in convening the summit, it does not mean that Jordan or the region is pinning its hopes solely on American investments or assistance, the Crown Prince said in answer to a question. Instead, he said, the vision was very broad based, providing for cooperation and interaction with all interested parties on the basis of a clearly economic programme with definite objectives in sight.

Similarly, the several-billion dollar allocation that the European Union has announced as assistance to Mediterranean countries — including Jordan — for the next four years is also not the pillar of the economic strategy, the Crown Prince said, adding that it was more important to have a very clear and coordinated approach on a regional basis so that all parties involved could benefit.

— The private sector in the region needs more information and more experience, and the MENA summit will serve as a forum to launch projects to provide exactly the same requirements.

Jordan is committed to comprehensive economic development and would have liked to see all countries in the region taking part, he said, adding that Iraq could not take part because of the international sanctions against it, and Iran, Syria and Lebanon had declined to accept invitations to the MENA summit.

The Jordanian approach, according to senior officials preparing for the summit, is that it cannot wait for other countries in the region before it goes ahead with its own agenda for economic development and regional interaction.

Room will be there for those staying away to take part, but Jordan simply cannot afford to freeze its own approach because of their non-participation, the officials explained.

— Looking back at the one year after Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty, the Crown Prince said Jordan, along with Egypt and Israel, has appeared for the first time among the 48 most competitive countries in the world in latest international ratings. Similarly, the Kingdom's creditworthiness rating

as set by prestigious institutions has also gone up, he noted.

There was never a "list of promises" or predetermined achievements coupled with the signing of the peace treaty, said the Crown Prince, adding that it was very difficult to pinpoint satisfactions or disappointments on the popular level with the achievements so far.

"One of the peace dividends is (that) Israelis and Jordanians are meeting and agreeing or disagreeing on a number of issues" as neighbours involved in a political and economic process, he said.

The Crown Prince took a swipe at local tabloids, whose reports, he said, project a picture of a "no-win situation... (and) that we are living in a cul-de-sac."

The Jordanian-Israeli cooperation agreements already signed and about to be signed as part of the peace treaty is part of the "realisation of the objectives" of developing the Jordan Valley that the two countries share and the development plans are not restricted to simply developing the tourism sectors, he pointed out.

The peace process, he said, has withstood the "stresses and strains... despite the violence (in the Palestinian territories), in southern Lebanon and the stalemate" in negotiations between Israel and Syria and Israel and Lebanon.

Israel may speed up pullout

(Continued from page 1)

Hebron will pave the way for general elections.

The elections, to a Palestinian autonomy council, will take place on Jan. 22, according to Mr. Tsur, who suggested that a curfew should be placed on the towns if necessary to avoid demonstrations during the pullout.

"We must protect the honour of our army, which is leaving certain parts of the West Bank after controlling it for years."

"I can understand that (the Palestinians) are very happy to see the army leave the territories. But we must ensure that the army leaves in a honourable fashion."

Palestinians decorated Jenin on Monday as thousands of Israeli Arabs crowded into it to shop from its cheaper market two days before Israel begins its hand-

over of the city. Jenin was festooned with Palestinian flags and streamers and men slipped fresh coats of beige paint on shops. They said the city was never cleaner.

Palestinians said by Sunday Israel had finished transferring inmates from the prison in Jenin along with equipment and furniture.

Senior PLO and Israeli security officers were to meet later on Monday to finalise arrangements for the entry of Palestinian police to the district.

Palestinians said the shopping rush was spurred by fears Israel will seal off the town during the handover. Israeli Arabs have traditionally crossed into Jenin to shop at its market where goods go for half the price charged in Israel.

PLO seeks mediation

(Continued from page 1)

embassies in Nicosia. Capt. Kolidas said about 30 people still had problems. Some had "false passports, others the mother is Lebanese, the father is from Jordan and the children were born in Libya."

A Libyan government official boarded the Countess M to check the passports of the remaining passengers.

The captain voiced relief that the crisis, at least for most of the Palestinian families, was over.

"It was the worst experience of my life because I was responsible for the safety of the ship and passengers," said Capt. Kolidas, admitting that tension on board had spilled over into violence.

"There was a lot of trouble on the ship because people did not know where they were going to go or what was going to happen to them. Between them they had disagreements."

"They broke plates and threw trays of food at each other," he said.

"I didn't feel threatened because their problem was

not against us. We looked after them, their problem was with people outside ignoring them," said the Greek captain.

The passengers "apologised for their anger" as they disembarked.

In Copenhagen, a leading Palestinian official on Monday slammed the Libyan expulsions of Palestinians as behaviour contrary to the Middle East peace process and appealed for international help to resolve the problem.

"Qadhafi's behaviour is contrary to the peace process, human rights and damaging to Arab relations, it does not help anybody," Palestinian National Authority Planning and International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath told a news conference.

"We must stop these Libyan shenanigans somehow, sooner or later our international and Arab friends must help solve this problem," he said. "It is negative to have Palestinians treated like boat people."

U.S., smaller nations

(Continued from page 1)

to the universal character of the United Nations, voiced concern over the rampant selectivity the organisation shows in several key fields.

"Selectivity... is rampant, whether in the fields of peace and security, disarmament, conflict resolution, peace-making, or areas of development, trade, environment and human rights," said Ali Akbar Velayati, the Iranian

foreign minister.

The success of the United Nations in the coming century lies on the concept of sovereign equality among member nations, he said.

"Levels of intrusion are dictated by the agenda of

Isolated Libya wants share of tourist market

CAIRO (AFP) — Foreign air travel may be banned because of a three-year-old U.N. embargo but Libya still hopes to put itself on the map by building up its tourism sector.

"We created a ministry of tourism three months ago because we are ready to develop this sector after having given priority to agriculture and industry," said Mohammed Abulhol, the head of Libya's tourism council.

"Moreover, oil will run out one day and tourism could be a substitute," Mr. Abulhol told AFP.

Tripoli's plan to draw in foreigners comes as the country launches a campaign to throw out more than a million African workers.

The deportees are in the country illegally and burden a Libyan economy already reeling under sanctions, Mr. Abulhol said. "Tourists don't like to see these strange people wandering the streets. They want a clean country."

Since April 1992, Libya has been under an air embargo.

"This stupid and unfair embargo makes travelling more difficult, but it doesn't effect tourism. We will work it out," Mr. Abulhol said.

Last year, Libya had almost 95,000 tourists, mostly from Germany and Italy, he said. "Tourists are looking for new destinations and Libya offers some great treasures."

Chief among them, 2,000 kilometres of hardly touched coastline, the dunes of the Sahara as well as some unique Greco-Roman ruins, especially at Cyrene, known to the ancient world as Leptis Magna.

Libya also has prehistoric cave drawings at Machadusi and in the Acacus mountains, and Islamic and Christian sites, notably a grotto in which Saint Mark prayed after fleeing Alexandria, Mr. Abulhol said.

He also pointed to a "modern monument": The giant artificial river project which Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi launched in 1983 across the Sahara.

Libya has drawn up with the WTO a master plan to revive its tourist infrastructure.

Currency market heads for crisis

LONDON (AFP) — The French franc and sterling fell suddenly against the mark at midday Monday in trading marked by a high degree of anxiety about the financial and political situation on several fronts and particularly in Italy.

The franc fell below 3.53 to the mark to 3.5354 from 3.5178 late on Friday and the Bank of France maintained its emergency 24-hour rate at 7.0 per cent.

Share prices fell sharply in London, by 1.1 per cent, in Frankfurt by 2.91 per cent, in Paris by 1.36 per cent to the lowest point of the year, and by 1.42 per cent in Milan owing to political crisis in Italy.

In Paris a dealer commented: "There is an unpleasant feeling of calm before a storm. The climate is unhealthy."

The lira fell to 1,163.25 to the mark from 1,147 late on Friday because former Italian prime minister, and leader of

the right-wing opposition, Silvio Berlusconi has tabled a no-confidence motion.

This might attract support from reformed Communists and bring down the technocratic government of Prime Minister Lamberto Dini, leaving Italy without a budget for next year.

In London, David Coleman, an analyst at Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, said: "The damage of the Italian political crisis is not confined to the lira but is also affecting most other currencies and particularly the French franc, sterling and dollar."

"This trend is likely to continue in the long term, and the mark will strengthen while other European currencies will remain under pressure. This is particularly the case for currencies of countries having difficulty in meeting the Maastricht criteria."

At Banque Internationale de Placement in Paris, expert

Christian Dargnat said: "European currencies are generally weak and this is helping the mark and Swiss franc, which serve as havens."

"The market would react badly if Dini fell," he warned.

The franc has been weak for several weeks because of deep scepticism that the French government can reduce the budget deficit to three per cent of gross domestic product in time to qualify as a founder of a single currency.

Another factor is suspicion that the French government might relax the policy to keep the franc strong, the so-called franc fort policy.

In Paris, where parliament is involved in tough debate about how to reduce the deficit in the 1996 draft budget, the finance ministry said Monday that the state still had to close a gap of 15 billion francs (\$3 billion) to achieve the planned deficit of 321.6 billion francs in this

year's budget. This was after allowance for special measures already adopted.

In London, sterling fell to below 2.19 marks to 2.1893 from 2.1911 initially and 2.2039 on Friday.

The dollar was very weak at 1.3890 marks from 1.3975 here late on Friday and it dipped to 99.95 yen from 100.00 on Friday.

The chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, has warned that if steps are not taken soon to reduce the deficit, long-term interest rates will rise, causing great strains in the economy. Late on Friday the yield on 30-year treasury bonds rose to 6.35 per cent from 6.30 per cent.

In Germany on Monday a member of the central council of the Bundesbank, Ernst Welteke said that the likelihood that the German repurchase rate would fall from 4.03 per cent to less than 4.0 per cent had receded in recent weeks.

Stable oil prices kill trading incentives

LONDON (R) — Oil derivatives, which promised to be one of the boom markets of the 1990s, are showing signs of running out of puff as shrinking business on the futures exchanges is mirrored in off-exchange market.

Oil price stability, evidenced by a drop in volatility in recent months to the lowest levels in several years, is one of the main problems. Low volatility kills hedging incentives and limits trading opportunities.

But some industry participants also point to fundamental obstacles which have blocked the development of the market.

They see a reluctance by many oil companies to hedge much of their oil output even when they think oil prices will fall.

"We don't hedge a significant part of our oil price risk," said Enterprise oil finance director Andrew Shilston.

"We don't believe fundamentally that our shareholders would want us to do that. If the oil price doubles and you denied yourself, say, a doubling in the oil price for an extended period shareholders would be annoyed," he added.

British independent Enterprise is among the most sensitive to oil price fluctuations with a \$1.00-a-barrel drop in oil prices reckoned by analysts to slash \$45 million from its cash flow. With oil prices down \$3.00 since May to below \$16.00, Enterprise shares have shed 20 per cent in the same period to 340 pence.

Enterprise's reluctance to embrace oil derivatives is typical of many oil companies, analysts say.

Research by Philip Verleger of Washington D.C.-based oil consultants Charles Rivers Associates shows oil companies do very little hedging and most of what

they undertake is on a short-term basis.

Fillings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission show that Enron Corp's capital trading unit stood out as a sophisticated user of derivatives, operating "more or less like a bank," said Mr. Verleger.

Among the oil majors, France's Elf Aquitaine, British Petroleum and Royal Dutch/Shell Group are the most active hedgers, but even they shy away from hedging on a scale that might have significantly impacted their performance.

"Most investors still prefer oil companies not to hedge, but if you can prove that you can do better over time by hedging then attitudes might change," said Catherine Arnfield, European oil analyst at J.P. Morgan Securities.

A rare example of aggressive hedging is Argentine oil producer Perez Companq, which has in the past three years sold forward up to 100 per cent of its 21 million barrels a year of oil production with impressive results. The hedge strategy has produced some \$100 million of income which Perez would not of had it had been at the mercy of oil prices.

"The feedback we receive from our investors and analysts is that it is a very good policy and allows us to grow in different areas," said Osvaldo Hansen, a Perez Companq spokesman.

"You hear the managers of oil companies saying 'look, our investors don't want us to hedge,'" says consultant Verleger. "But the bottom line is that they don't want them to hedge when prices are going up but they do when prices are going down."

But even if oil companies' attitudes change, the market still lacks the depth to grow substantially without potential long-term oil buyers.

U.S. tells FAO to trim spending

ROME (R) — The United States Monday, told the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to cut costs.

Echoing President Bill Clinton's weekend message to the 50th anniversary congress of the United Nations, U.S. Deputy Agriculture Secretary Richard Rominger told the FAO's governing conference in Rome that Washington still backed the agency's work but wanted it to trim its spending.

"It is essential that FAO have a lower budget," he said.

Mr. Rominger told reporters before the speech that the United States, one of FAO's major donors, believed the agency could run its programmes under a 1996/97 budget of \$600 million. That would be nearly \$100 million less than the budget

proposed by FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf.

He wants the biennial conference to approve \$697.8 million, which he says means zero growth from the previous budget.

But Mr. Rominger said the proposed budget needed to be brought in line with "realistic revenue projections."

He said the U.S. contribution to FAO could be "less than the current year's budget" because Congress, now debating Mr. Clinton's Democratic budget, could cut funding for international agencies.

The Republican-controlled Congress, aiming to balance the U.S. budget within seven years, has been weighing proposals that would cut foreign aid by as much as 30 per cent.

The FAO conference, which brings together senior officials and agriculture ministers from its 174 member countries, is expected to vote on its budget Friday.

Mr. Rominger said FAO should drop or merge programmes that duplicated those of other agencies, trim administrative duties and reduce the number of employees working in the field.

FAO, housed in a marble complex near the ancient Roman Circus Maximus, was founded 50 years ago with a mission to help the world to feed itself. It has long been criticised by major donors like the United States for runaway spending.

Before Mr. Diouf was elected last year, it employed some 6,000 people, making it one of the U.N.'s largest agencies.

The FAO studies food supply and nutrition, runs agricultural development projects in the Third World, and follows environmental issues such as fishing rights and deforestation.

"The United States continues to believe that much of what FAO does is extremely valuable," Mr. Rominger said, mentioning a FAO monitoring bureau which gives early warning of famine as one of several effective programmes.

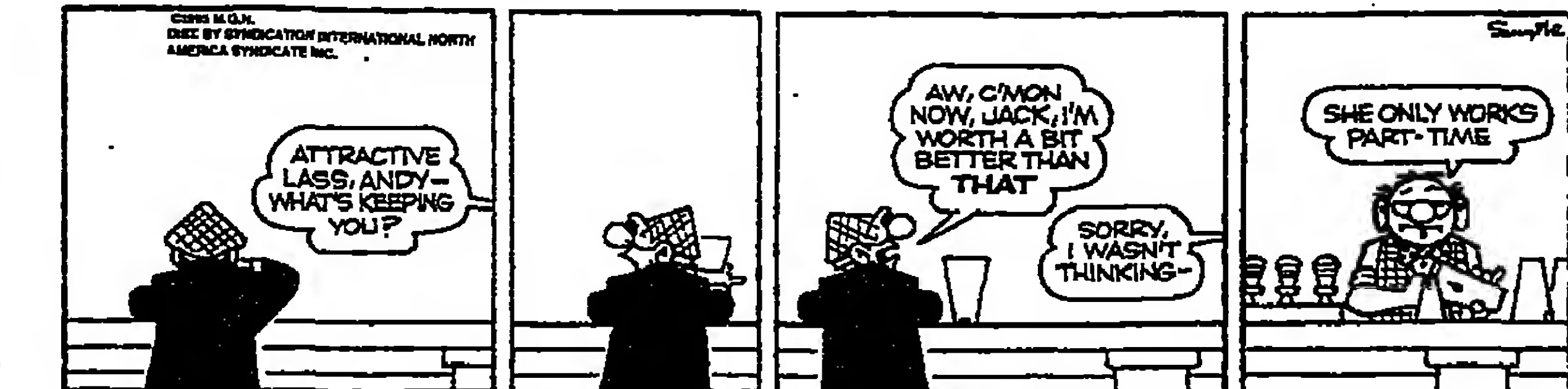
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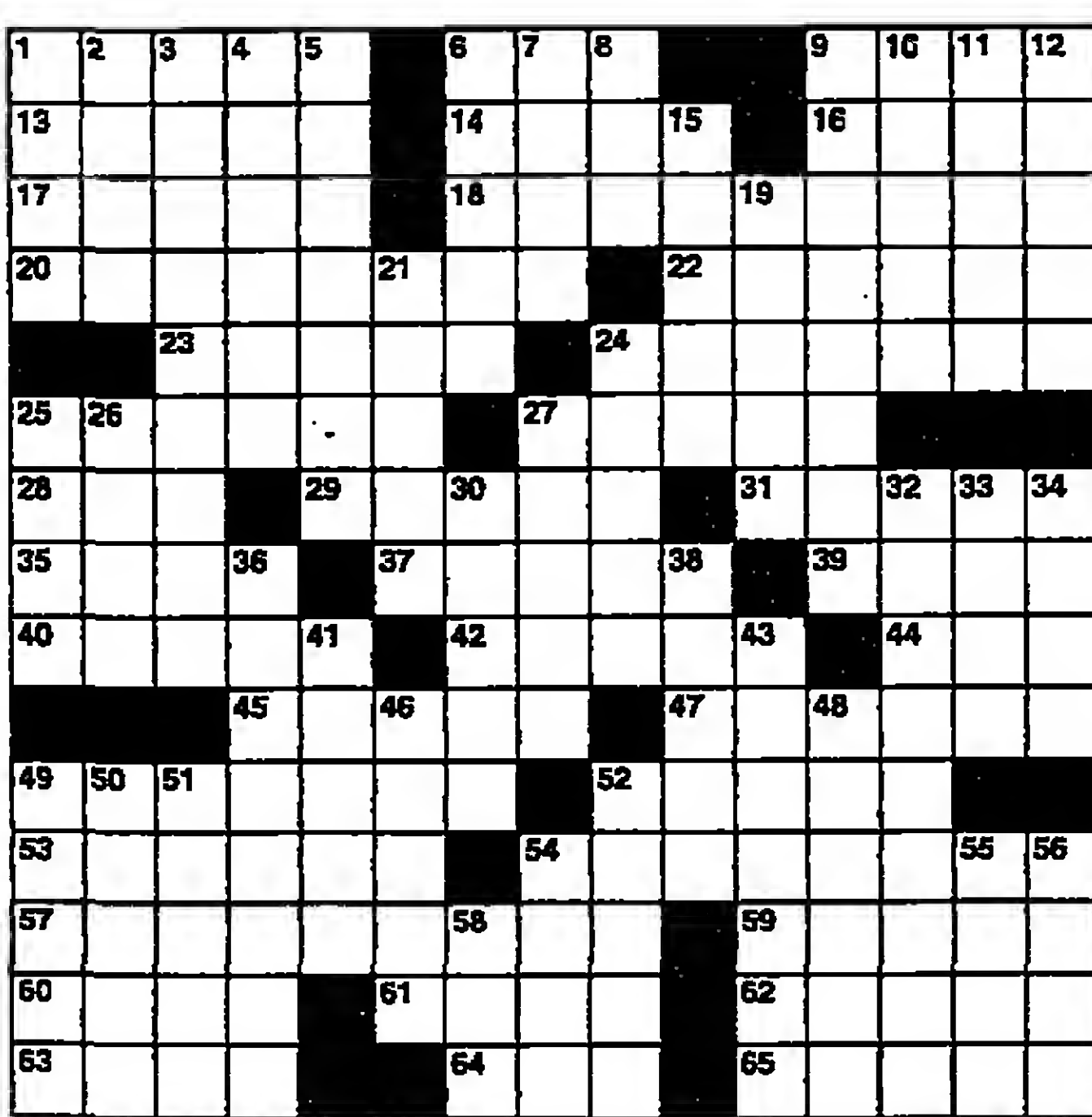
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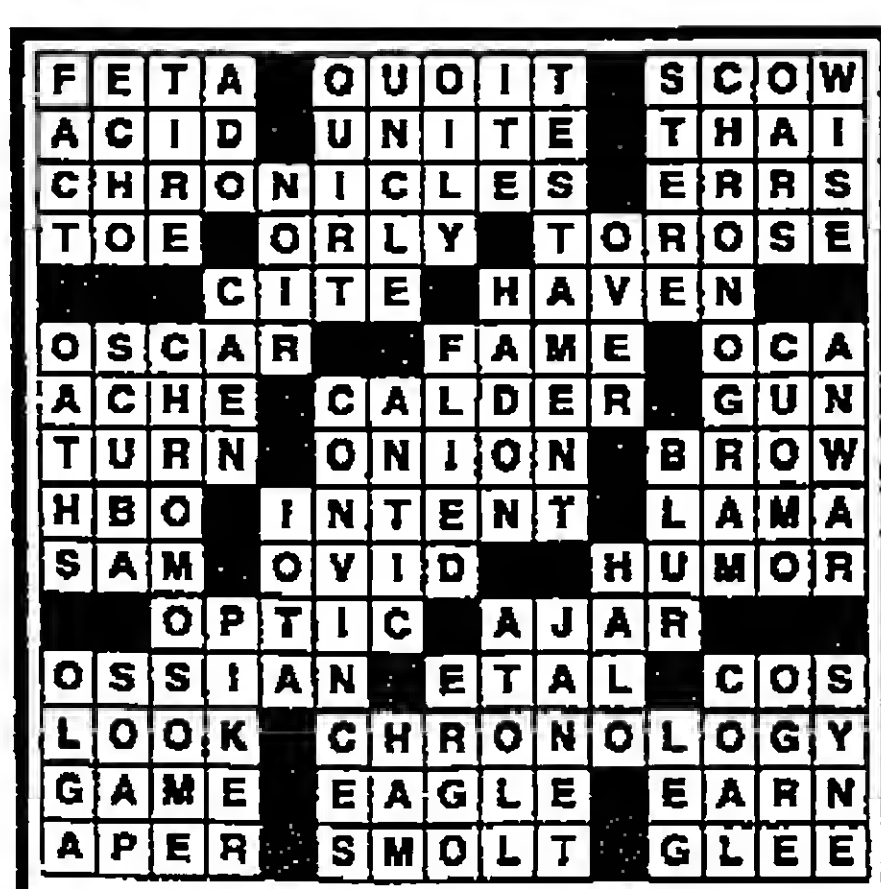
THE Daily Crossword by Wilson McBeath

ACROSS

- 1 Hadj destination
- 6 Lard
- 9 Verve
- 13 Pines
- 14 "When I was —"
- 16 Within: pref.
- 17 Sidelack
- 18 KY city
- 20 Fictional loser
- 22 Manly
- 23 Unrefined petroleum
- 24 Threatened
- 25 One-seeded fruit
- 27 Begat
- 28 Demier —
- 29 Librarian's device
- 31 Small groups
- 35 Distant: pref.
- 37 Récoils
- 39 Angry
- 40 Site of a civil rights march
- 42 Part of a map
- 44 Dog doc
- 45 Finish second
- 47 Commiserates
- 49 Get new merchandise
- 52 Moses' brother
- 53 Like the Matterhorn
- 54 Dilates
- 57 — State (Kentucky)
- 59 Coup —
- 60 Gardener's concerns
- 61 Nibble
- 62 Notched irregularly
- 63 Part of MIT: abbr.
- 64 Debussy's "La —"
- 65 Sound measurements



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- ### DOWN
- 1 Spar
 - 2 Nymph
 - 3 Famous Downs
 - 4 Middle, in Oxford
 - 5 Flabbergast
 - 6 Quiz choice
 - 7 Nautical term
 - 8 Duty
 - 9 Reduces in value
 - 10 Capar
 - 11 Fur scarf
 - 12 Sharpened
 - 15 Louganis, e.g.
 - 19 Dressed to the —
 - 21 Concepts
 - 24 Bogs
 - 25 Play divisions
 - 26 Indian
 - 27 Rouen's river
 - 30 Dense
 - 32 KY city
 - 33 Hold at bay
 - 34 Gels
 - 36 Least
 - 48 Matador
 - 49 Synagogue figure
 - 50 Actress
 - 51 Taters
 - 52 Goose genus
 - 54 City in Italy
 - 55 Alleviate
 - 56 Fr. holy women: abbr.
 - 58 Aspire

Israel predicts 6.8% growth for '95

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's economy, fuelled by peacemaking with the Arab World and robust immigration, will grow by 6.8 per cent this year, far more than initially predicted, the Central Bureau of Statistics said Monday.

However, the trade deficit is expected to reach about \$10 billion by the end of the year, up from \$7.9 billion in 1994, and nearly double what it was in 1991.

Israel's projected gross domestic product (GDP) growth compares favourably to most developed countries, bureau officials told a news conference. They cited a projected 1995 GDP growth of 2.5 per cent for Germany, three per cent in France and 3.2 per cent in the United States.

Israel's economy has grown by more than a third since 1990, when a large number of immigrants began arriving from the former Soviet Union, many of them academics, engineers and skilled workers. More than 600,000 immigrants have arrived in the past five years.

At the same time, inflation is decreasing from 14.5 per cent in 1994 to an estimated 8.5 per cent this year.

Despite the positive trends, some warned that Israel's economic policies ignored the growing trade and budget deficits.

Economist Zeev Golan said Israel receives nearly \$10 billion in foreign aid and loans every year, or nearly one-seventh of its GDP.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Astrological Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Think about how to make your home life more ideal today and establish greater harmony there. Entertain friends this evening.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) This is a fine day for contacting old-time friends and renewing the relationships so they can continue far into the future.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Concentrate on improving your monetary status today so that you can have a greater abundance for the lean time in the future.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get in touch with those who comprehended your needs at this time and find out much help you can expect from them at a later time.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Contact a successful advisor today and gain suggestions for your greater success. More happiness is possible with your mate this evening.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Plan how to make good friends happier today and increase the prestige you are now enjoying. Get busy at any project which is started.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Know what your finest ambitions are and get the ball rolling today in such directions. Be happy in the evening in the company or loved ones.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Although somewhat frustrated about any new activities today, you can make big progress just the same since you are ingenious and very knowledgeable.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Organise your responsibilities more wisely so that you can be more productive. Tell your mate just what you want in the near future.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) If you are very cooperative today, you can initiative and work out a partnership very well at this time. Be wide awake to some worldly affair.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get into project which can last for some time to come and you will have regular income coming in with the possibility of success.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Plan the amusements you most like in the days ahead. Then do some big favour for your mate and you will have greater accord and appreciation.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

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Business & Finance

Travel agents draw battle lines to tackle sex tourism

CAIRO (AFP) — Tourism ministers and travel agencies combined forces Sunday to combat the sleazy side of the tourist industry which feeds off sex and has turned more than a million children into prostitutes worldwide.

The 11th assembly of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) ended Sunday with the adoption for the first time of a resolution to fight "sex tourism."

"We want to try to prevent tourism organised for prostitution, especially when it affects minors," said WTO Deputy Secretary-General Francesco Frangiali.

The resolution was drawn up during the six-day meeting in Cairo which was attended by 67 tourism ministers and 700 travel agencies.

Brazil and other Latin American countries were strongly in favour of the resolution.

"It is a problem which results from poverty and mainly developed in the 1980s. In our country 70 per cent of the population is less than 35, which increases the numbers of minors exposed to this type of exploitation," said a Brazilian delegate, asking to remain anonymous.

"We have undertaken to cut out any association between Brazil and sex from our promotion material and we have set up a committee to identify those tourist agencies indulging in such practices," he added.

Cuba also backed the resolution to combat what it termed "this aggression" against children.

The resolution calls on governments "to take measures against organised sex tourism" and for businesses

to "adopt a code of conduct to push out those who organise such trips."

It also called on countries to reach agreements with others to "make it easier to take action against tourists taking part in illegal sexual activities involving minors."

Germany, Britain, Sweden and Australia have already toughened up their legislation and begun legal proceedings against their nationals accused of paedophilia abroad.

Several of the major tourist companies are "also cooperating to circulate information because they want to clean up at home," Mr. Frangiali said.

The group has targeted sex-tourism for several years and drawn up a wealth of information about the phenomenon after consultations with the U.N.'s committee for human rights, Interpol and non-governmental organisations such as End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism, based in Bangkok.

The WTO wants to "have a more long-term vision and is looking to help the affected countries to develop tourism in other areas," Mr. Frangiali added.

It has already drawn up plans for an \$800,000 project in the Philippines between 1990 and 1992 and a \$1.4 million project in Sri Lanka from 1991 to 1994 with the help of the U.N. Development Programme.

In the Philippines, where the sex enthusiasts come mainly from Japan, authorities have just announced a series of strict measures and closed down several establishments.

Sweden and UNICEF are to organise a world conference in Stockholm next August on the sexual exploitation of children.

Syria, Lebanon seek joint bank to check Arab-Israeli ties

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese and Syrian businessmen have called for the creation of a joint bank and holding company to bolster bilateral private investments to counter growing Arab-Israeli economic ties.

The recommendation, initially called by Syria, was made Saturday, ahead of next week's Middle East economic summit in Jordan.

Both Syria and Lebanon are boycotting the conference. U.S. and Israeli officials have said the Oct. 29-31 economic summit in Amman will launch a development bank for the Middle East and North Africa to foster regional cooperation and joint development schemes.

The businessmen, who held talks in Beirut, also stressed the need to encourage private investments in Syria and Lebanon and suggested credit facilities as well

as the scrapping of customs duties.

"Syria and Lebanon must confront economic challenges which are bred by regional developments and agreements struck between Arab countries and Israel," Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri told the businessmen.

Syria's Industry Minister Ahmad Nizameddin said Damascus backed "anything which reinforces common Arab action but is opposed to anything which divides their ranks."

Syria and Lebanon are bound by a 1991 treaty of "brotherhood, cooperation and coordination" and in 1993 signed an annex to bolster social and economic ties between the two countries.

Last may they further consolidated ties by setting up a private body grouping businessmen from the two countries.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
HOUSING BANK CENTER, AMMAN - SHMEISANI				
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179				
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 23/10/1995				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE	PREV. CLOSING	LASTING
	TRADED	JD	PRICE	PRICE
BANKS				
JORDAN BANK PLC	1520	364965	243.250	241.750
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1952	6892	4.400	4.400
BANK OF JORDAN	5380	19636	3.650	3.650
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	3850	4625	1.200	1.200
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	1700	4080	2.420	2.400
JORDAN KUNAFT BANK	1050	2952	2.840	2.840
JORDAN GULF BANK	70464	81378	1.160	1.150
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	598	2202	3.690	3.690
BUTLER BANK INVESTMENT	1850	6235	3.380	3.370
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1180	4389	3.720	3.720
BEIT KHALIL SAVINGS/INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	300	670	3.250	3.580
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	88850	92930	1.060	1.030
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	3089	4713	1.550	1.560
BANKS SECTOR				
ABTAHAN SEAS INSURANCE	20000	36747	1.760	1.850
JORDAN FRESCO INSURANCE	100	270	2.700	2.700
INSURANCE SECTOR				
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	141300	23474	1.670	1.650
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	285	543	2.080	2.050
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1050	1050	1.000	1.050
MACHINERY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	550	6466	2.800	2.800
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRA'Y	550	5375	9.800	9.770
UNITED HEDGE FUND & COMMODORE HOTELS	500	1190	2.380	2.380
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	1600	5364	3.380	3.240
SARQA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	3450	4565	1.340	1.320
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	5350	5679	1.090	1.100
SERVICES SECTOR				
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	1880	6802	3.720	3.660
THE ARAB POTASH	1095	5362	4.900	4.900
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	965	9089	9.400	9.400
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	700	2323	3.380	3.320
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	1320	6215	4.740	4.720
JORDAN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRIES	264	1581	6.000	6.000
JORDAN DAIRY	200	200	2.500	2.500
RAVIA INDUSTRIES	800	1832	2.290	2.290
DAR AL DARS DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	2830	20176	7.130	7.130
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	650	3530	5.470	5.430
LITREXCO & POLYMER	44350	30214	680	680
GENERAL INVESTMENT	97	252	2.600	2.600
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	2400	3400	1.420	1.410
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	1800	2700	1.500	1.490
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	5800	2762	1.080	1.060
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	4900	9178	1.860	1.860
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	250	1038	4.200	4.150
JORDAN SULPHUR-CHEMICALS	6050	8029	1.330	1.320
ARAB THERMAL POWER & CHEMICALS	5450	10894	2.040	2.000
KAWTHER INVESTMENT	400	652	1.640	1.630
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	200	630	3.150	3.150
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	2790	5532	2.000	1.970
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	7050	11042	1.580	1.560
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	9600	13867	1.450	1.420
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY	4750	9664	2.040	2.040
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR				
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	244579			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	185339			
GRAND TOTAL				
	336451	854545	INDEX NUMBER: 158.71	CHANGE: -0.52%

BUSINESS Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordan will not change Aqaba status

ANY TALK about minimising the role of the Aqaba port to the benefit of the tourism sector in Jordan is false and harms national principles, Ports Corporation Director General Dureid Mahasneh said. Noting that the port is Jordan's only sea outlet and earns the Treasury a JD 75 million annual income, Dr. Mahasneh said minimising the role of the port was a suggestion from the Israeli foreign minister that was rejected along with the idea of having a joint Jordanian-Israeli port. The corporation's chief said the port handled 13 million tonnes of goods during the first nine months of this year although its actual capacity can reach 30 million tonnes. He noted that the decline was a result of lower Iraqi imports passing through the port. Iraqi imports accounted for 70 per cent of the port's operations (Al Aswaq).

New bank shares' over-subscribed

SUBSCRIPTION IN shares floated by the Export and Finance Bank totalled 6.7 million shares, 1.7 times more than the four million shares offered for public subscription. As such, the allocation will be at a rate of 58 per cent (Al Aswaq).

Israeli firm hires Jordanian engineers

AN ISRAELI telecommunications company hired 15 computer engineers, Israeli Economy and Planning Minister Yossi Beilin said. He added that Israeli-Jordanian cooperation in this field was not expected as he anticipated the cooperation to be in the textile and foodstuff areas due to the low wages paid by Israeli employers. The minister said some Israeli textile factories in Egypt employ hundreds of labourers (Al Aswaq).

Israeli market to be studied

THE JORDAN Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation is about to prepare a study on the Israeli market to provide Jordanian exporters with information about the Israeli market. The corporation will start promoting Jordanian products in the Israeli market next year.

350 to 360 for summit

BETWEEN 350 and 360 personalities from the Jordanian private sector will be participating in the Amman economic summit, according to a list recommended by the executive committee of the private sector and sanctioned by the minister of industry and trade who is the president of the preparatory committee for the summit. This number is the largest of any private sector from Arab or international participants. However, the number of those who will attend the opening ceremony will only be 110 persons due to limited space at the Palace of Culture. Jordan's public sector will be represented by 200 officials (Al Rai + Al Dastour).

HOROSCOPE

FOR THE DAY, OCTOBER 24, 1995

ARIES: March 21 - April 19: Don't count on too much success today. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Taurus: April 20 - May 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Gemini: May 21 - June 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Cancer: June 21 - July 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Leo: July 21 - August 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Virgo: August 21 - September 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Libra: September 21 - October 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Scorpio: October 21 - November 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Sagittarius: November 21 - December 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Capricorn: December 21 - January 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Jan 21 - Feb 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Feb 21 - Mar 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Mar 21 - Apr 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Apr 21 - May 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

May 21 - Jun 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Jun 21 - Jul 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Jul 21 - Aug 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

Aug 21 - Sep 20: Don't let a time day distract you from your work. You may have more luck tomorrow.

JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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Lorraine

Unseeded Dewulf beats Muster

VIENNA (R) — Unseeded Belgian Filip Dewulf caused a major upset in the Austrian CA tennis trophy on Sunday, triumphing over favourite Thomas Muster in a hard-fought four set match.

Cool-headed Dewulf lifted his first major victory and \$66,000 in prize money after beating world number three Muster 7-5, 6-2, 1-6, 7-5.

A furious Muster, sensing his dream of winning in Vienna for the first time slipping away, smashed his racket in half in the third game of the last set, earning himself a warning from the umpire.

The game proved to be a turning point as Muster, too often wrong-footed by his agile 23-year-old opponent, missed a simple forehand to an open court giving Dewulf the game and renewed confidence to take the match.

It was Muster's second defeat on home territory this year, losing to Spain's Alberto Costa at the Austrian open in Kitzbuehel in August.



Thomas Muster

The Austrian sports media had hoped for a final pitting Muster against Germany's Michael Stich. But Stich was forced to retire from the tournament after tearing a ligament in a quarter-final match.

Dewulf, who saw off eight-seed Jonas Boerckman of

lob from Muster with a confident cross-court smash.

Dewulf broke Muster's serve twice in the second set by deploying an array of deft shots, replying to the Austrian's powerful strokes with delicate drops which left Muster rooted to the back court.

In an attempt at a comeback, Muster took less than 20 minutes to take the third set with his trademark power serves winning two games to love. But after losing his serve game twice, Dewulf was clearly content to reserve his energy for the next and decisive set.

Despite taking the fourth set to 12 games, Muster failed to keep up the winning streak, losing his service game with two double faults to give Dewulf the match.

Dewulf who began here as number 119 in the world, travels to his next tournament in Brest in France ranked 60.



Wayne Ferreira

Ferreira upsets Sampras in Lyon final

LYON, France (R) — Fourth seed Wayne Ferreira of South Africa played a sensational match to upset world number two Pete Sampras in the final of the \$600,000 Lyon men's tennis Grand Prix on Sunday.

Ferreira, throwing caution to the wind as he risked winners on virtually every shot, triumphed 6-5, 6-3 in a gripping match lasting two hours 13 minutes.

The American top seed, seeking a fourth tournament victory in Lyon, was let down

by his first serve but it was his opponent's ability to pull off surprise winners and hit the lines almost at will which caused his downfall.

An elated Ferreira said: "I played one of the best matches I could play. I was hoping I wouldn't get tight at the end. I just put on the pressure the whole match and never let him in."

Sampras, who had not lost a set all week, looked likely to sweep Ferreira aside as well when he ran up a 3-0

lead in the first set.

But the South African, tentative till then, decided to go on the offensive, breaking Sampras before levelling at 3-3 and then going on to a tiebreak which he played impeccably to win 7-2.

Sampras looked more solid in the second set, which he won 7-5, but Ferreira again gained the upper hand when he broke to lead 3-1 in the third in a game which lasted more than 10 minutes.

The American almost cracked when serving to save the match at 2-5, double-faulting three times, twice to give the South African match point.

But a big serve and an unforced error by Ferreira on a simple forehand kept him in the match as he pulled back to 5-3 and he earned two break points in the next game before the South African finally triumphed on his third match point.

Italian soccer roundup

Milan held to draw by upstart Vicenza

ROME (AP) — Upstart Vicenza held league-leading AC Milan to a 1-1 draw Sunday, but the red-and-black's closest pursuers failed to gain ground in the Italian first division.

Roberto Murgia's header in the 48th minute equalised for Vicenza, promoted from Serie B this season. Midfielder Stefano Eranio had put Milan (15-11, 16 points) ahead in the 43rd.

AC Milan, alone in second place heading into the round, drew 1-1 at As Roma, while Lazio of Rome, which had held third place, played a scoreless draw at Internazionale of Milan.

Parma, Juventus of Turin (a 3-1 winner over Padova), and Napoli (which beat Piacenza 1-0) remained two points behind Milan with identical 4-2-1 records. Lazio, the league's only undefeated club, is another point back at 3-4-0.

In other matches Sunday, it was Sampdoria 2, Fiorentina 1, Udinese 1, Torino 0, Bari 3, Cagliari 0, and Cremonese 1, Atalanta 1.

Vicenza 1, Milan 1

At Vicenza, the hosts (3-2-2) controlled the midfield, outplaying Milan's cast of internationals but failing to convert good scoring opportunities.

One-time Italian international Eranio turned in a precise feed from

Liberation-born striker George Weah to give Milan an unmerited lead. Just after halftime, Murgia leaned to head in Uruguayan defender Gustavo Mendez's free kick. French midfielder Marcel Desailly appeared to hit the winner for Milan in the 55th, but the goalkeeper waved off the goal, ruling that winger Gianluigi Lentini had interfered with goalkeeper Luca Mondini.

Roma 1, Parma 1

At Rome, Italian international midfielder Dino Baggio continued his penchant for key goals with club and country, threading a low, angled shot between the post and goalkeeper Giovanni Cervone in the 75th minute to salvage the draw. Uruguayan striker Daniel Fonseca had put Rome (1-4-2) up by heading home a cross from substitute forward Francesco Totti in the 46th minute for his first goal of the season.

Inter 0, Lazio 0

At Milan, Inter (2-3-2) packed its backfield to stymie the powerful Lazio offense and rarely generated threats of its own.

Juventus 3, Padova 1

At Turin, rising star Alessandro Del Piero scored for the second straight Sunday, nailing a 25-metre free kick in the 39th minute. Fellow Italian international Fabrizio Ravanelli added his fourth goal of the season from 2 metres in the 55th. After forward Nicola Amoroso put the ball past charging goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi in the 77th for Padova (0-1-6), midfielder Antonio Conte netted Juve's third goal in injury time.

Piacenza 0, Napoli 1

At Piacenza, goalkeeper Massimo Taibi sent the ball into his net off a free kick by Napoli's Brazilian defender Andre Cruz for an own-goal in the 68th minute. Piacenza fell 2-1-4.

Sampdoria 2, Fiorentina 1

In Genoa, little-used midfielder Fausto Salsano tallied the winner in the 72nd minute, putting in the rebound of Serbian midfielder Sinisa Mihajlovic's powerful 40-metre free kick. The hosts (2-3-2) took the lead in the 11st minute on Filippo Maniero's acrobatic score before Portuguese midfielder Rui Costa equalised for Fiorentina (4-0-3) from the penalty spot in the 55th.

Udinese 1, Torino 0

At Udine, German striker Oliver Bierhoff scored on a penalty kick after he was pulled down in the area by defender Roberto Bacci in the 73rd minute. Bierhoff's six goals are second in the league. Udinese improved to 3-2-2, while Torino is 1-3-3.

Bari 3, Cagliari 0

At Bari, a lifeless match

turned explosive in the second half, with Swedish striker Kennet Andersson netting his first goal in Italy in the 54th. League-leading scorer Igor Protti hitting scored off a diving header from 12 metres in the 61st for his seventh goal and Colombian forward Miguel Guerrero — who came on for Protti one minute earlier — made it 3-0 for Bari (2-2-3) in the 62nd.

Cagliari (2-1-4) had gone three straight matches without a loss after starting the season 0-0-3.

Cremonese 1, Atalanta 1

At Cremona, Serbian midfielder Marko Perovic turned in winger Andrea Tentoni's cross one minute before halftime to gain the draw for Cremonese (0-2-5). Atalanta (2-3-2) had gone ahead in the 23rd on Domenico Morfeo's running shot, his second goal in as many matches.

Jordan Times
Tel. 699634

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMMAM HIRSH
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WEICH SUIT?

Both vulnerable, South deals.

NORTH

♠ K 5

♥ 10 9 8 6 3

♦ A 8 6 4

WEST

♠ Q 10 8 3 2

♥ 7 6 5 4 3

♦ K 7

♣ J 10 6

SOUTH

♠ A 6 4

♥ A 9

♦ J 9 5

♣ K 9 7 3 2

The bidding:

1♣ Pass 1♠ Pass

1NT Pass 2♣ Pass

Opening lead: Two of ♠

The French phrase for this type of illusion in painting is *tromp l'oeil* (tricking the eye). There are many examples at the bridge table. Consider this deal.

North has a close decision between an invitational two no

trump and the raise to game. The fifth diamond is just enough to tip the scales in favor of the latter.

West leads the two of spades against three no trump. Plan the play.

The first question is whether or not to hold up on the first trick. Since West's two of spades suggests so many than four cards in the suit and you don't want a heart shift, you win the first spade. Now it is a question of which minor suit to attack.

With nine clubs headed by the ace-king in your two hands, that certainly appears to be the logical suit to attack. If clubs are 2-2, you will have nine tricks. However, the odds favor a 3-1 division, and in that case you will be down to only eight tricks and have no time to set up a ninth before the defenders collect five — two spades, two diamonds and a club.

Even if diamonds are 5-0, you can set up three tricks in the suit and, if the spades are indeed 4-4, the defenders can take only four tricks, two spades and two diamonds, before you gather in nine — three tricks in diamonds, and two in each other suit.

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Invitation for Bids
Renovation and rehabilitation of
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landside system for berths
No. (3 to 10) in Aqaba Port
Tender No. (195/95)

International contractors who are specialised and have long experience in the field of designing and executing renovation and rehabilitation of cathodic protection groundbeds landside system for berths, are invited to participate in the above tender. The tender documents can be collected from the Government Tenders Directorate in Amman as of Oct. 24, 1995, in accordance with the following terms:-

1- Scope of work
Renovation and rehabilitation of cathodic protection for landside system for berths (3 to 10) at Aqaba, general cargo which includes designing calculation, procurement, installation testing and commissioning of the new system.

2- Offers which include conditions or reservations will not be considered.

3- The latest date for the purchase of tender documents by eligible bidders is 4/11/1995.

4- A pre-bid conference will be held at The Ports Corporation / Aqaba, at 9 o'clock a.m., on 6/11/1995 and a visit will be arranged on the same day.

5- Fee for each set of tender documents is JD 50, non-refundable.

6- Bids are to be submitted to the Government Tenders Directorate not later than 13:00 hours p.m., Amman local time on Saturday 18/11/1995.

Eng. Nasser El-Madadha
Director General

Whitaker wins show jumping meet

MONTERREY, Mexico (AP) — John Whitaker of Great Britain has won the \$450,000 Pulsar Grand Prix International Show Jumping Competition held in Monterrey's club Hipico la Silla.

On the last day of the four-day event, Whitaker captured the prize in the second round of the Grand Prix, riding 16-year-old Everest Grannusch.

"The course was quite difficult especially since number three," said Whitaker. "Grannusch had to go wide to make the jump. That's where the time fault came from."

Whitaker also qualified for

the \$1.5 million purse in Pulsar Crown, and he has already won a minimum prize purse of \$25,000 for his win Sunday.

And if he wins the next two in Luxembourg and Valkenswaard, the Netherlands, he will be awarded \$1.5 million prize next year.

If he wins only one of the two, his total purse will still be \$600,000.

Whitaker won the competition by achieving the lowest number of total faults over the two rounds with a clear first round and 0.25 time fault in the second for a combined total of 0.25 faults.

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Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30					

Saddam offers more food, promises political change

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, rewarding Iraqis for his overwhelming referendum victory last week, has increased their food rations and promised parliamentary elections early next year.

From December each Iraqi will get seven kilograms of flour a month instead of six kilograms and 750 grams of vegetable oil instead of 625 grams, an official statement in Monday's newspapers said (see page 2).

The government had cut the flour ration from nine kilograms a month in September 1994 because under U.N. sanctions it could not raise the foreign exchange for imports.

President Saddam ordered the increase at a joint meeting on Sunday of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council and the Baath Party, held to review the Oct. 15 referendum in which over 99 per cent of voters voted Saddam Hussein president for seven more years.

Ministers had already said they expected the parliamentary elections, the first in seven years, and the statement made this formal. It set no date but under the current law they should take place by the end of February.

The rations, which also contain rice, sugar and tea, have been highly effective, providing millions with staple items at give-away prices. The food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said last week they had prevented famine in Iraq.

But the current ration covers only 38 per cent of average calorie requirements and 43 per cent of their protein. Iraqis must buy the rest of their food on the open market, where prices can be more than a thousand times higher.

The increase compensates to some extent for inflation, which for foodstuffs was on average about 14 per cent a month between June 1993 and August 1995, according to FAO figures.

The government has been financing grain purchases by printing money, adding to hyperinflation.

A FAO report last week said the system was unsustainable and the government and the United Nations must agree on a system giving the government access to foreign currency, either by unfreezing Iraqi assets or through oil sales.

The official statement portrayed the parliamentary elections as the next step in what Iraq rulers say is a transition to constitutional rule. 27 years after the military coup which brought the Baath Party to power in 1968.

It said: "The great experiment in the field of applying authentic democracy is an additional incentive to the leadership, the party and the people to go forward in deepening and developing the democratic march."

"It has been decided early next year to elect a new National Assembly according to the National Assembly law and within the framework of the concepts of the (Baath) Party and the (1968) revolution," it added.

Political reforms announced in 1988 led to elections few months later of the present 250-member National Assembly (parliament). Its four-year mandate was extended because of the U.N. sanctions imposed since 1990.

Iraq has several political parties but all of them are allied with the ruling Baath Party in a national front.

UAE call hailed

Baghdad meanwhile welcomed a call by the president of the United Arab Emirates to lift the U.N. sanctions on Iraq and urged a broad-based Arab effort to "end the crime of the embargo."

The official Iraqi News Agency, quoted Baghdad's government-run Al Chawra daily as hailing the Oct. 15 statement by the UAE leader, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan.

The newspaper, mouthpiece of Iraq's ruling Baath Party, said: "The initiative of Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan and the Arab response to it, opens for the Arabs, including Iraq, new roles guaranteeing the reformation of their brotherly relations to build the present and the future."

Sheikh Zayed said that the crippling sanctions should be lifted to end the suffering of Iraq's people.

The 22-member Arab League, Egypt, Sudan and Qatar have voiced support for Sheikh Zayed, who also urged reconciliation in the Arab World, which was split over the Iraqi invasion.

Dubai's crown prince has also called on Arab countries to help the Iraqi people by working to lift the sanctions. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum was speaking in an interview with a German television station.

"I am very happy with the remarks of the president and his call for... returning Iraq to the Arab fold," said Sheikh Mohammed, who is also UAE defence minister.

"I ask, on the basis of the president's call, all Arab countries and especially the Gulf states to help the Iraqi people by lifting the sanctions and extending immediate aid to them," he said.



DEPARTURE: An Israeli army truck leaves the military administration headquarters in Jenin, the first West Bank town due to be handed over to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) beginning Wednesday (see page one (AFP photo))

Zeroual gets a domestic boost for cancelling Chirac meeting

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Algerian leader Liamine Zeroual emerged Monday in a stronger position than ever to crush his political rivals, as Algerians rallied behind his French counterpart over perceived infringements of Algerian "sovereignty."

This cancellation, like a clap of thunder, has wiped out all the apparent weakness and restored political parity in Algeria's favour. La Tribune daily said.

"Bravo Zeroual," wrote the pro-government daily L'Authentique, while Al Umma said the decision was "a slap in the face for France and for Al Salam."

The praise followed Mr. Zeroual's abrupt cancellation Sunday of a meeting in New York with President Jacques Chirac, in the wake of criticism of its timing by some French officials.

This reassertiveness on the part of Algeria's leaders in their dealings with the country's former colonial master, came on the first day of the official campaign for presidential elections in which Mr. Zeroual is firm favourite. The polls begin on Nov. 16.

By firmly rejecting what was seen here as an attempt by Chirac to meddle in Algeria's volatile politics, analysts said, Mr. Zeroual donned the mantle of the late President Houari Boumedienne, a fervent nationalist who consistently denounced French "neocolonialism."

When he gets back from New York, there is no doubt Mr. Zeroual will benefit from his "firm stand" which was amplified by the publicity surrounding the 50th anniversary of the United Nations which both he and Mr. Chirac are attending.

The Algerians rejected a French version of events which said it was Mr. Zeroual who asked to meet Mr. Chirac, claiming that France had requested the meeting.

They also objected when France refused to hold the meeting in front of the television cameras, saying Algeria did not conduct its diplomacy "in a semi-clandestine fashion."

Mr. Zeroual's own spokesman criticised "official and semi-official" statements by French officials which, he said, amounted to "an attack on the dignity and sovereignty" of his country.

Without being specific, Algerian leaders were thought to be referring to Mr. Chirac's own statements about the need to give economic support to "the Algerian people" to prevent the country sliding into "chaos."

Another remark which raised hackles here called for "credible and democratic" legislative elections to be organised in Algeria.

The French Socialist Party called the Zeroual-Chirac meeting "ill-timed" — a position condemned by the Algerian authorities and the Algerian press.

"In this affair, we were not reacting to French criticism which was inadmissible, we were observing the rules of diplomacy," Algerian officials said.

"In New York, the latest French demands were the last straw," they said, apparently alluding to Mr. Chirac's reticence about posing with Mr. Zeroual for the television cameras for fear this could be interpreted as a sign of French support for Mr. Zeroual in the presidential polls.

The French press said meanwhile Mr. Chirac only narrowly avoided a diplomatic trap when the meeting with Mr. Zeroual was cancelled.

Most added that the cancellation by Mr. Zeroual would be greeted with relief by French diplomats.

"The Chirac-Zeroual meeting was a trap which almost got the president, who was forced to react at the last minute, when the catastrophe was almost on him," said L'Est Republicain.

Liberation stressed Mr. Chirac's escape from the dangers which going through with the meeting would have presented.

"The cancellation... of the Chirac-Zeroual meeting illustrates the extreme difficulty for France to play a role, even as advisor, in Algeria, without being put called into question by one side if not both," it said.

France-Soir pointed out that Mr. Zeroual would be able to make as much political capital out of cancelling the meeting as he would have been able to by meeting Mr. Chirac under the glare of the media spotlight.

Clinton secures Arab League praise

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Arab League on Monday praised the Clinton administration for opposing congressional attempts to move the U.S. embassy to occupied Jerusalem.

"The current U.S. administration's intention to veto the proposed law before Congress on this matter is positive," said Kamal, the league's deputy secretary general for Palestine, told journalists.

"The moving of the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem will remain a dream for the Jews but Arab states will strongly oppose any attempt to impose a fait accompli in Jerusalem," Mr. Kamal said.

Congress was to debate later Monday a bill calling for the embassy to be moved to Jerusalem by 1999, sponsored mainly by Senate majority leader and presidential candidate Bob Dole.

Mr. Kamal said the timing of the debate "was part of the American presidential election campaign," aiming "to bring in Jewish votes and support."

U.S. President Bill Clinton has announced he would veto the bill, warning it would deal a blow to the Middle East peace process.

Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are due to start negotiations covering Jerusalem by May 1996. The Palestinians want the eastern sector as the capital of a state of their own, at the end of five years of autonomy launched in May 1994.

Israel seized and "annexed" the Arab eastern sector of Jerusalem in 1967, proclaiming the whole city as its "capital". But it has failed to secure international recognition.

Some 70,000 Israelis signed a petition handed to U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk on Monday backing plans to transfer his embassy to Jerusalem.

A former Israeli ambassador to Washington linked to the right-wing opposition Likud, Zalmay Shoval, was behind the initiative timed for the start of the congressional debate on the proposed transfer.



'The world thanks you, look this way'

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — No fidgeting class of first-graders could have given a photographer a tougher job than the global leaders captured Sunday in a historic U.N. anniversary "class portrait." The final product would make their mothers proud — a sea of smiles from a world of troubles. But it was hardly a trouble-free snapshot. First, the half-dozen or so "no-shows" for the New York celebration — they included Germany's Helmut Kohl and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak — threw off the intricate composition plans of specialist photographer Paul Skipworth of Dallas. "He had to rebalance the 190 that were left to get the perfect rectangular shape," official U.N. photographer John Isaac said. Skipworth's assistants began bossing these big bosses around: "Move to the right," "this way here." As the "this ways" and "that ways" wore on, President Bill Clinton began joshing with those around him. France's Jacques Chirac began to smirk. Russia's Boris Yeltsin began to look mystified. "Everybody's got to move a half-step this way," someone ordered. Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto rolled her eyes upward. "That's it... Now, everyone remove their name tag and put it in your pocket." Amid laughter, as sari-clad women and African robed men searched for a pocket, Skipworth announced, "That's it... The world thanks you. Look this way suddenly, a big 'smiley-face' banner was unfurled beneath the large-format camera, the ice was broken, and Skipworth had his once-in-a-lifetime shot: America and Iran, India and Pakistan, Afghanistan and Russia, Israeli and Arabs, all smiles, all at once.

Invitations to U.S. reception 'eaten by dog'

NEW YORK (R) — Seven nations barred from a glittering reception for world leaders hosted by President Bill Clinton to mark the United Nations' 50th anniversary were told their invitations had been eaten by a dog. The list of undesirable featured Iran, Iraq, Cuba, Sudan, North Korea, Libya and Somalia. "There are a number of nations whose invitations got lost in the mail," a senior U.S. official said playfully. "The dog ate them. Woof." The U.S. accuses Iran, Iraq, Sudan and Libya of sponsoring terrorism, Cuba and North Korea are Communist pariahs and Somalia, plagued by factional fighting, has no recognised government.

Mistaken quote offends Iranians

UNITED NATIONS (R) — An error by a White House reporter angered Iranian diplomats at the United Nations, and obliged U.S. National Security Adviser Anthony Lake to try to correct the mistake. The error occurred when the reporter quoted an unidentified U.S. official as saying that only "dog nations" were excluded from a presidential reception. The official said the excluded nations included Iran, Iraq, Cuba, Sudan, Libya, North Korea and Somalia. "No, a flippant administration official on background did say that the dog — this was with regard to the invitations — that the dog ate the invitations," Mr. Lake said.

Arafat says U.N. must continue to back Palestinians

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat told world leaders on Sunday the United Nations should continue to sponsor the cause of Palestinians until they achieve self-determination and national independence.

Addressing the start of a three-day special session marking the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, he said all developments in peace making between the Palestinians and Israel has been based on U.N. Security Council resolutions and the principle of land for peace.

The history of the United Nations was "intertwined with that of the question of Palestine" since a 1947 resolution partitioning it into two states, one Jewish and one Arab.

"The history of the United Nations and its resolutions constitute an expression of its permanent legal, political and moral responsibility," he said.

"They make the United Nations a witness to the immense suffering of our people and their sacrifices, their displacement and scattering in all parts of the world, as well as to the wars and massacres which have been inflicted upon them."

This was Mr. Arafat's first appearance before the United Nations in New York since a 1974 address in which he said he came "bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun," adding: "Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand."

Wearing his military-style uniform and keffiyeh head-dress, he said the U.N. "should continue to sponsor our Palestinian cause alongside of our inalienable national rights, including the rights of our people to return, self-determination and national independence."

This meant the U.N. "remains responsible for the cause of our people" because such important issues as the future of Jerusalem, the question of Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements and final borders had been left to the final stage of negotiations with Israel, due to begin next May.

Palestinians embarked on the peace process because they desired to "turn over the leaf of killing and destruction, once and for all, so that the Palestinian people and the Israeli people may live side by side in two independent states on the basis of mutual respect."

Reconciliation must be completed on all other Arab-Israeli negotiating tracks, particularly with Lebanon and Syria, he said.

"In order to be just and comprehensive, peace must also include the peoples of Iraq and Libya," he added, referring to two Arab states most strongly opposed to the current peace process.

Recalling his earlier appearance before the assembly, Mr. Arafat said: "I came to you 21 years ago as a fighter for freedom, liberation and independence, carrying with me the torments of my struggling people. Today, I come to you with a heart filled with love and peace now that the olive branch has adorned the peace of the brave... good tidings have been heralded. Help us to bring it to fruition."

KDP claims advance on PKK bases

ANKARA (Agencies) — Iraqi Kurdish guerrillas said on Monday they had launched a big drive against the final stronghold of rival Turkish Kurd rebels in the mountains of northern Iraq.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) said about 2,500 of its fighters were closing in on Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas in the rugged Khawakurk district near Iraq's border with Iran in an operation begun on Sunday.

"Khawakurk is the last area where they have enough power to exert an influence over the region," KDP Turkey representative Safeddin Dizeyee said. "We plan to clean the area and leave the PKK in a bad position throughout the winter," he said.

The KDP claimed that over the last six weeks its fighters have killed more than 350 PKK guerrillas, wounded hundreds before and taken 90 prisoner.

The KDP put its losses at 105 fighters killed, along with 90 civilians.

It said its forces have driven the PKK out of Dohuk province, which borders Turkey.

PLO sees Khartoum as venue for Hamas talks

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) said Monday that Khartoum was the likely venue for planned reconciliation talks with the hardline movement Hamas next month and praised Sudan for its mediation.

"Thanks to Sudanese mediation, there is a strong chance that a meeting between Fateh and Hamas will be held in Khartoum in a month," the PLO's representative to Sudan, Omar Abu Shalashel, told AFP.

"At the moment, Khartoum is making preliminary contacts to fix a date and agenda for the meeting," between Hamas and PLO leader Yasser Arafat's main faction Fateh, he said.

Mr. Shalashel said Sudan had already hosted talks between the two parties under the auspices of Hassan Tourabi, the spiritual leader of the Islamic regime which took power in Khartoum in 1989.

Dr. Tourabi, "whose wisdom, moderation and concern for Palestinian unity is recognised by all, including the West, has called for a dialogue and Hamas as well as Fateh have responded positively," he said.

Mr. Shalashel, after returning from three weeks in the Palestinian self-rule area of Gaza, met Saturday with President Omar Al Bashir to brief him in on his talks with Mr. Arafat, who heads the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Egypt, whose relations with Sudan are tense, has also officially invited Hamas and the PNA to hold talks in Cairo. The Egyptian government daily Al Ahram has said "the two parties accepted the invitation."

Mr. Shalashel cautioned that an agreement with Hamas was still months off.

"There are encouraging signs that an accord will be reached between Fateh and Hamas before April and the Hamas leadership in the territories will take on a more pragmatic language and attitude," he said.

He said dialogue between the two sides was continuing. "We hope the Hamas leadership in the territories will convince its members abroad to participate."

After a meeting in Khartoum between Hamas's local leadership and its members abroad in early October, the self-rule authority accused the "external" leaders of blocking an accord which local members were seeking.

NEWS IN BRIEF

IAF deputies protest joint air show
AMMAN (J.T.) — Islamic Action Front (IAF) members of Parliament Monday criticised the participation of Royal Jordanian Air Force jets and helicopters in a formation flight over Israel, Jordan and the West Bank. "An aircraft piloted by a Zionist terrorist, who has been raiding our cities, villages and camps, must not be made to fly joyously in the skies of Amman," the deputies said in a statement. "Likewise the Jordanian eagle (the emblem of RJAf)... must not fly the skies of Palestine except in a mission of jihad," the statement said. The Islamist parliamentarians called for an end to "normalisation between our Armed Forces and the enemy's as in all other aspects."

Shiites begin hunger-strike on Bahrain
NICOSIA (AFP) — Seven leading Shiite Muslims began a hunger-strike on Monday to try to force the Bahraini authorities to free 500 political prisoners, spokesman Abdul Wahab Hussein Ali announced. "We have started the hunger-strike," schoolteacher Hussein Ali told AFP when contacted from Nicosia. Joining Mr. Hussein Ali were five religious leaders — Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Attami, Sheikh Ali Ahmad Al Jed Hafi, Sayed Ibrahim Al Alawi, Sheikh Hassan Sultan and Sheikh Hussein Dayhi — as well as another teacher, Hassan Mshaima. The group is demanding the release of those who were imprisoned without trial during violent street protests between December 1994 and April this year, he said. The authorities have since August released 250 people following a deal to free prisoners in return for calm, but the opposition said 500 people remain behind bars. The accord was not announced officially.

Clergy urges Iranians to pray during eclipse
TEHRAN (AFP) — The Shiite Muslim clergy called on the nation on Monday to pray during the solar eclipse expected to be seen in the holy town of Qom in central Iran on Tuesday. The Islamic Propagation Organisation (IPO) said in a statement read on Tehran Radio that people "should pray from the beginning to the end of the eclipse." However, "it is not mandatory for people who live in regions where the eclipse is not visible to pray." Shiite Muslims perform special prayers for most natural phenomena, mainly for solar eclipses. The eclipse is expected to be seen from 5:30 a.m. (01:53 GMT) in Qom, 150 kilometres south of the capital, to 6:22 a.m. (02:52) in the town of Birjand, a 1,000 kilometres away to the east. Several teams of experts and many photographers have travelled to Birjand to watch and register the eclipse, which will be more visible in eastern Iran where the sun rises higher on the horizon. Birjand Governor Mohammad Kazemi said Monday his town was ready to welcome about 5,000 Iranian and foreign visitors who will travel there to watch the most important eclipse in the country in 50 years.

Taliban planes bomb army base near Kabul

KABUL (Agencies) — Two rebel aircraft dropped at least seven bombs on an Afghan government military base just west of Kabul on Monday, the second air raid near the city in as many days, witnesses said.

Government soldiers at the Qargha military base, about 10 kilometres west of the city, showed reporters seven fresh bomb craters after the dawn strike.

They said one person was wounded in the raid, but the bombs all fell in open ground well clear of the main base and there was no sign of recent damage to buildings.

Defence Ministry spokesman Abdullah said SU-22 jets of the Taliban militia had carried out the attack, but had been driven off by anti-aircraft fire.

On Sunday, a plane dropped two bombs on a residential district beneath Kabul's strategic Television Mountain, wounding at least seven people and destroying one house, in an attack the government blamed on the Taliban.

The air strikes have added to mounting military tension between pro-government forces and Taliban fighters dug into positions in hills overlooking the southern suburbs of Kabul.

U.N. special envoy Mahmoud Mestiri has been trying, so far without success, to arrange a ceasefire by the Taliban since they arrived at the gates of the capital two weeks ago.

"I want to prevent another battle for Kabul, which would be very bloody and destructive," Mr. Mestiri told Reuters on Sunday.

The Taliban have won control of more than half Afghanistan since they emerged as a new military power a year ago with the declared aim of sweeping aside quarrelling guerrilla factions to install a strict Islamic regime.

The black-turbaned Islamic warriors have been negotiating with other opposition groups in the supreme coordination council on forming a military alliance to mount a joint attack on Kabul.

Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, resisting Taliban demands he surrender, says he is willing to resign only if he can transfer power to an agreed interim body.

Mr. Mestiri's efforts to broker a peaceful solution to the war appeared to have fallen on deaf ears, with Taliban commanders refusing to comply with his call for an end to hostilities.

Taliban leaders have dismissed the U.N.'s mission in Afghanistan as futile and have vowed to push forward with their military campaign.

Commander Jalali, an officer in the government's 70th division, said government troops had repulsed three offensives by Taliban fighters during the past three days.

"We are not witnessing any military movements now," he said. "The Taliban are remaining in their defensive lines and are not making any movements."

Government troops fired the occasional rocket towards Taliban positions as the commander spoke to reporters.

Jalali also said Taliban had suffered heavy casualties on Saturday when government planes bombed a supply convoy heading for Charasayab, a Taliban stronghold south of Kabul.

He said several dozen trucks had been carrying weapons and reinforcements to the Taliban when they were attacked.